

NARROW GAUGE WORLD

ISSUE 181
JAN-FEB 2024



■ DURANGO'S K28 CLOCKS UP 100 YEARS



EXMOOR EXCELLENCE

UK'S BUSIEST LOCO BUILDER?

NG MODELLING



■ BIG 009 AT WARLEY NATIONAL

- ▶ 11 PAGES OF LATEST NARROW GAUGE NEWS
- ▶ NEW MODEL RELEASES FROM NATIONAL SHOW

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024 | £5.49



9 771466 018090 01
www.world-of-railways.co.uk



FFESTINIOG RAILWAY

in OO9 Scale from Bachmann Narrow Gauge

Launched at the Ffestiniog Railway's Bygones Weekend and celebrating 60 years of preservation, we are delighted to present *The Ladies!*



009
SCALE



391-135/SF
Mainline Hunslet 2-4-0STT 'Linda'
Ffestiniog Railway Green



391-136/SF
Mainline Hunslet 2-4-0STT 'Blanche'
Ffestiniog Railway Green

ALL MODELS FEATURE:

- DCC-ready with a NEXT18 DCC decoder interface
- **SOUND FITTED** Versions available
- Authentic liveries, logos, crests and colours
- A diecast metal chassis block
- Etched nameplates
- A wealth of separately applied detail parts
- A powerful coreless motor
- NEM coupling pockets
- Highly detailed & decorated cab interior
- Firebox Glow (on analogue) / Firebox Glow & Flicker (on DCC or when operating SOUND FITTED models)

**SOUND
FITTED**



Available now from all Bachmann Stockists, for more information visit:
www.bachmann.co.uk

PUBLISHER
Steve Cole
stevec@warnersgroup.co.uk

EDITOR
Andrew Charman
12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys, SY21
0BD. Tel: 01938 810592
Email: editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk

FEATURES EDITOR
David Joy
Email: dawjoy1@gmail.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION
Andrew Charman

MULTIMEDIA SALES MANAGER
Sarah Jarman
Tel: 01778 392055
Email: sarah.jarman@warnersgroup.co.uk

AD PRODUCTION
Allison Mould
Tel: 01778 395002
Email: allison.mould@warnersgroup.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Tel: (0) 1778 392469 (UK & Overseas)
Email: subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk

UK: £40.50; Rest of Europe: £52.00;
Outside Europe: £60.00

DISTRIBUTION
News trade
Warners Distribution – Tel: 01778 392417
Model Trade
Warners Trade Sales – Tel: 01778 392404
Overseas Agents
JAPAN: Eriei Co, Ltd, 1-1-12
Toyotama-kita, Nerima-ku, Tokyo 176
Printed by: Warners Midlands Plc
Lincolnshire

All rights reserved. Material is only accepted on the understanding that there are no copyright restrictions. Although every care will be taken, all materials submitted are at the owner's risk and Warners Group Publications cannot be held responsible for loss or damage however caused. Copyright on all materials in this magazine remains vested in the Authors and Warners Group Publications. Reproduction of the whole or any part is forbidden without the relevant permissions. Warners Group Publications and the Editor cannot be held responsible for any error that might occur in text or advertisements. Reliance placed upon the contents of the magazine is entirely at the reader's own risk.

© WARNERS GROUP
PUBLICATIONS PLC 2024
ISSN: 1466-0180

Cover: Double-headed 15-inch gauge power at the Perrygrove Railway with 0-6-2 'Anne', built in 2004, leading the line's first loco, 0-6-0 'Spirit of Adventure' built in 1994. Both are recognisable products of the Exmoor Steam Railway, and in this issue James Waite begins an exclusive two-part feature on this prolific loco builder, with full access provided by the Stirland family.

Photos: Andrew Charman
and Michael Chapman

**NARROW GAUGE WORLD is published
nine times per year.**

**This issue on sale 29th December 2023
Next issue published 23rd February 2024**



www.warnersgroup.co.uk

Issue No 181 Jan-Feb 2024

www.narrow-gauge-world.co.uk
www.facebook.com/narrowgaugeworld
Email – editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk



CONTENTS

05 First Lines
New year starting with a bang

06 Headline News
Train rolls over in Patagonia

08 UK News
Statfold donates carriages to Bala

15 World News
Highest station reopened in style



18 Waite's World
The many locos of Exmoor

22 Locomotives
Centenary of a US icon

25 News Gallery
Winter charters underway

29 European Lines
Poland in the 1990s

32 NG Heritage
Rheidol opens doors to museum



34 UK Lines
Rails around a Lancs clay pit

39 NG Modelling
Big 009 at the Warley national

42 NG Modelling
Rockmaking for NGW project layout

44 On the Model Shelf
Lionheart's 7mm Lynton excellence

46 On the Shelf
Models, books and DVDs

48 Viewpoint
Reader views on wide range of issues

49 NG Extra
Mysteries and memories

50 Encounters
Footplating on the Barsi



NEXT ISSUE – MAR-APR 2024

On Sale 23rd February

Everything You Need For Your Digital Model Railway

DIGITRAINS

DIGITAL MODEL RAILWAY SPECIALISTS

www.digitrains.co.uk



 **Listen to our latest
Narrow Gauge DCC
Sound installations here.**  

- Try before you buy
- Expert Advice
- Great Service
- Experience
- Major Brands
- Worldwide Mailing

We stock 1,000s of products from more than 30 leading manufacturers. Don't worry if you're not digital.

We're also a traditional model shop, holding all the major ready-to-run lines.

 @digitrainsltd  digitrainsltd

 digitrainsltd

15 Clifton Street Lincoln LN5 8LQ
(01522) 527731
enquiries@digitrains.co.uk

Welcome to the New Year...



“There’s a lot of potential on what is one of only two south Wales railways, and one with an American theme...”

Photos: Evidence of the enlightened management the Brecon Mountain Railway will now benefit from with Vale of Rheidol ownership is captured here, the VoR’s loco no 8 ‘Llewellyn’ attracting a whole lot of new interest following a repaint into a British Railways black livery. Joey Evans took the shot on 3rd November.

This issue of *NGW* is due to hit the shops two days before the end of the year so you should just be recovering from the festive excesses – unless of course you get your issue digitally a week earlier, in which case you will be right in the middle of them! Have faith, I’m writing this a couple of weeks even earlier and there’s already plenty of evidence that we are going to enjoy lots of narrow-gauge excellence in 2024.

The first big story of the year is that the Vale of Rheidol Railway is going to take over the Brecon Mountain Railway. I can now admit I first heard about the prospects of this a couple of months ago and I’m very glad we are now able to report it as happening.

Once upon a time the Rheidol was a line that made few headlines, but over the last decade or more it’s certainly made up for that, these days being one of the most exciting narrow gauge railways around with lots of stuff seeming to be going on, all the time.

In contrast, the Brecon Mountain Railway seems to have been running ‘under the radar’ for a long time, only occasionally featuring in our *Gallery* pages, never in the news ones, and particularly since the passing of its founder Tony Hills. There’s a lot of potential on what is one of only two south Wales railways, and one with an American theme not at all replicated across the UK – under the wing of the Rheidol we suspect we will be hearing

rather more from the direction of the Brecon’s Merthyr Tydfil base in future months and years...

Talking of the Rheidol, I seized the chance a few weeks ago to have a look inside what was once the line’s Aberystwyth loco shed and in future will be its museum and events space. Total transformation is not too dramatic a phrase to describe what has taken place here.

Standing in the bright, airy surroundings of the museum I was reminded of a photo I took on one of my first gricing holidays to Wales with my mate John Clark in the early 1980s. In those days the railway was still owned by British Rail, the shed well out of bounds, but standing on the station platform and using a long lens I took a black and white shot of loco and driver in silhouette as they prepared to emerge from what look a dark and dingy place. No more! I and many others are looking forward to seeing the museum when it opens this year.

Exmoor enterprise

Elsewhere in this issue I am truly delighted to have the first of a two-part study of the many locomotives of the Exmoor Steam Railway. The Stirland family are quite private as they have every right to be, and while I am personally disappointed I never got to ride the extensive railway around their Devon premises before they stopped opening to the public, I fully respect their desire to carry on their business without

the constant interruption of visiting enthusiasts – some of us can be very irritating – yes honestly!

And what a business! Exmoor engines are at the narrower end of the narrow gauge but very much proper narrow gauge locos and many a line today relies on the prolific output of the Bratton Fleming works. Well done to our James Waite for securing the feature and many thanks to the Stirlands for allowing us to give this successful loco builder the coverage it deserves.

Elsewhere in this issue we’ve been at the naming of ‘James Spooner’ on the Ffestiniog, an event at which I can honestly say the biblical rain added to the atmosphere and almost seemed appropriate to the surroundings. I’m not surprised the new double-Fairlie loco has already been the star of photo charters already – we get so many superb shots at this time of year during ‘charter season’ and it’s a shame we only have space for a few of them.

There’s some sobering stuff too, none more so than over the page with the derailment in Patagonia, something that reminds me why on the Welshpool & Llanfair board we spend so much time on health and safety and the dull but oh so necessary subject of risk assessments.

So as 2023 passes into history we look forward to 2024 which will no doubt be equally challenging, but already appears just as exciting. Enjoy your *NGW*.

Andrew Charman

Remarkable escapes as charter train rolls down embankment



Passengers were injured, some seriously, when a major derailment of a photo charter train occurred on the 750mm gauge Esquel branch in Patagonia, Argentina on 11th November, *reports James Waite*.

Henschel 2-8-2 no 104 (19405/1922) fell onto its side and took with it all its wooden-bodied carriages, mostly built in Belgium in 1922. They all fell over down a low embankment and one briefly caught fire, caused by its wood-burning stove and quickly extinguished by the train crew.

Built between 1921 and 405km long, the Esquel branch runs southwest from a junction with the Argentine 5ft 6ins gauge at Ingeniero Jacobacci. Much of it runs through the foothills of the Andes and is highly scenic. It was made famous as 'The Old Patagonian Express' by the author Paul Theroux, but locally is known as 'La Trochita' which translates as 'Little Gauge'.

Following closure in 1996 by Ferrocarriles Argentinos, the state-owned railway authority, the line was taken over by the local governments of the two provinces through which it runs because of its tourist appeal. It can fairly be described as the

world's longest heritage line of any gauge.

The accident occurred about seven kilometres west of a long girder bridge over the Río Chico Bridge near Cerro Mesa, between Norquínco to Ingeniero Jacobacci, a location much prized by photographers. The section near Cerro Mesa is notorious for washouts, and at least one previous passenger train is known to have derailed there. Many tour operators have avoided running over the section for many years though railway management had given permission for the train to run.

Serious injuries

Around half of the tour group were British and following the derailment at least one British passenger was admitted to intensive care at the hospital at Bariloche, the provincial capital. Others suffered serious injuries, most of them believed to have been riding in the carriage that caught fire.

Thankfully, however the majority of injuries were relatively minor and could be treated at the nearest hospital at Ingeniero Jacobacci, while other passengers escaped unhurt. Among these was Andy Smyth who

told *NGW* that the accident had all seemed to happen in slow motion; "By the time the toppling over-carriages reached ours we had virtually stopped moving."

The charter was promoted by Trains and Travel International, a US operator and in the UK by PTG Tours. As *NGW* went to press Trains and Travel International was still promoting the tour on its website, stating; "Railroad management has made it very clear to us that once our charter trains operate over the 74 miles between Cerro Mesa and Norquínco they will yet again stop all trackwork and repairs.

"Because of this... this will be our last planned set of charters over this famous line. So if you want to experience The Old Patagonian Express the way it was some 50 years ago we suggest you consider coming with us to Argentina in November."

Additional reporting by Andrew Charman

Above: The accident pitched Henschel 2-8-2 no 104 onto the side of an embankment.

Below: Most passengers escaped injury and were rescued by a fleet of 4x4 road vehicles.

Photos: Andy Smyth



Talks held over closing Laxey line – as ticket sales soar

Consultants studying the future of the Isle of Man's Government-run railways and tramways have held discussions over closing the northern half of the Manx Electric Railway between Laxey and Ramsey, but have been told the move would not lead to significant cost savings.

As we reported in *NGW* 175 all involved with the railways have been anxiously awaiting a Government-commissioned review and economic assessment – the move sparked fears of lines being cut, particularly as the terms of reference included “consideration of the alternative use for any railway assets no longer required.”

The report was planned to have been delivered by the end of June 2023 but as *NGW* went to press had still not been published. But in November Manx media reported that closing the MER between Laxey and Ramsey had been discussed, a freedom of information request revealing an email exchange between consultancy firm SYSTRA and an unnamed member of the island's Department of Infrastructure.

The discussion is also said to have considered reducing the northern twin-track section of the MER to single track, but the official said that this would add the cost of employing an extra stationmaster to enable staff-and-ticket operation. Having one tram in operation on section at a time would impact early and additional services and have safety concerns and even if the entire section was abandoned, the Government would have a statutory responsibility to maintain fences and drains.

Horses should go further

Better news for enthusiasts was that the consultants reportedly considered that returning the Douglas Horse Tramway to its full length, running to the island's sea terminal, would make it more attractive to cruise ship visitors. The tramway was cut back to half its length five years ago when work began on renewing the promenade.

As controversy continued to circulate over what might be contained in the final report from SYSTRA, Infrastructure Minister Tom Crookall told Tynwald, the island's parliament, that its conclusions were “certainly not explosive.”

Adding further fuel to the controversy were the latest results from the island's railways, which showed a 20 per cent jump in tram use, some 158,000 people travelling over the summer. The Steam Railway saw 128,000 users and the horse trams, in their first full season since the Covid pandemic, carried more than 45,000 passengers, the combined figures 12 per cent up on 2022.

Lines together again as Rheidol acquires Brecon



The Vale of Rheidol Railway (VoR) has announced that it is in negotiations to acquire the Brecon Mountain Railway (BMR) in what those involved describe as “an historic milestone for both railways safeguarding the future of the BMR for future generations to enjoy.”

In what will be the second merger of 2024, *NGW* having previously reported the acquisition by the Perrygrove Railway of the Evesham Vale Light Railway, the two Welsh 2ft gauge lines will effectively be rejoining one another.

The BMR was built by Tony Hills and his business partner Peter Rampton on the trackbed of the former Brecon and Merthyr Railway and opened in 1980. Eight years later when British Railway put the VoR up for sale Hills and Rampton purchased it and ran the two lines under unified management until 1996. It was then, decided to go in separate directions with Mr Hills running the BMR and Mr Rampton taking charge of the VoR.

Tony Hills passed away in 2015, and Peter Rampton in 2019 during a period of major expansion and improvement on the VoR, developing new workshops, restoring stations and launching new visitor facilities. This enhancement continues today as we report on page 32.

The BMR meanwhile has extended its line to Torpantau and established a

US-railroad theme with locos and stock.

According to the VoR statement the merger will bring a range of benefits to both railways and their visitors. The legacy of both Peter Rampton and Tony Hills will be secured, visitor experiences at both railways will be enhanced while the merger will allow for shared resources, increased operational efficiency, and cost savings, as well as new job opportunities.

VoR managing director Llyf ap Iolo sees the proposed acquisition as a natural progression for the Vale of Rheidol to carry on the legacy of both Tony Hills and Peter Rampton. “Having worked with them for over 30 years, it will be a privilege for us to continue Tony's work with the American 2ft gauge theme of the BMR,” he said.

BMR managing director Matthew Hills believes bringing the two railways back together will not only guarantee the future but also the development of the Brecon Mountain line. “I and my fellow directors believe that this is the best way to secure the future of the railway and my father's legacy,” he said.

The VoR is expected to take over BMR operations in Spring 2024 but the two will continue to operate as separate entities.

Above: The Brecon Mountain line is likely to retain its American theme under the new management regime. Photo: Andrew Charman

■ Probably the worst-kept secret in preservation (since outgoing general manager Stuart Williams announced it at the line's AGM) is that the Talylyn Railway's original Fletcher Jennings 0-4-2ST 'Talylyn' is to return from overhaul in a fetching shade of Great Eastern Blue, a livery it has not previously worn. The overhaul work was nearing completion at the end of November and the loco is set to be officially launched back into traffic on 22nd March.

Photo: Luke Ryan/TR



Statfold donates carriages to Bala



The Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust has donated four carriages to the Bala Lake Railway in a gesture that has been described by BLR Trust chairman Julian Birley as “Christmas come early.”

The four vehicles were originally built by Alan Keef Ltd for a line that ran at the Thorpe Park theme park in Greater London. They were acquired by the Lynton & Barnstaple railway in the early 1990s and rebuilt into a form appropriate to the Devon line. Made redundant by the restoration and construction of larger vehicles, they moved to Statfold in 2014 and were used until replaced by former South Tynedale Railway vehicles last year.

“We took the decision to donate the carriages to our friends at the Bala Lake Railway to help ensure that they have sufficient passenger capacity for their extension into Bala Town,” said Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust chairman Graham Lee.

“The carriages have served us at Statfold well, but with their little use it was time for

them to go and to be enjoyed by the visitors of the Bala Lake Railway.”

The four comprise two all-third vehicles, a brake third with guard’s compartment and a brake-composite with first-class compartment. Julian Birley described Statfold’s donation as an incredible boost to the railway and its future plans of extending into Bala town centre.

“This now gives the railway three rakes of four carriages giving a greater capacity to entertain the increased number of passengers expected when the centre of the town is reached,” he said.

“With the long drawn-out negotiations that have been on going in applying for planning permission from the Snowdonia National Park, it is great to see something actually associated with railways coming to the fore rather than dealing with subjects as mundane as sewage treatment works and phosphate discharges into the river. We are indebted to Graham Lee at Statfold Barn and look forward to him riding in them on our railway”.

Restored Avonside Woolwich takes up residence in Statfold museum

Avonside 0-4-0T locomotive ‘Woolwich’ (1748/1916) has gone on display in the Roundhouse Museum of the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust, following completion of a cosmetic restoration of the locomotive at the Staffordshire centre.



The 18-inch gauge loco was built for work at the Woolwich Arsenal, being withdrawn in 1960 and subsequently being preserved at Bicton Gardens in Devon where it ran for several years.

In 2000 new owners at Bicton sold off the ex-Woolwich stock and the loco was acquired by the Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills Museum. No significant work was done on it and in 2020 Statfold acquired the loco along with ex-Woolwich and Bicton Hunslet diesel ‘Carnegie’.

A Statfold spokesperson said that Woolwich would remain on display in the museum while an assessment is carried out with a view to fully restoring the locomotive to operation in the longer term. The museum does have an 18-inch gauge line on which Hunslet 0-4-0WT ‘Jack’ has previously operated.

Photo: SNGT



S&K platform to improve access

The Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway has begun a project to replace the life-expired wooden platform at Sittingbourne Viaduct station, ready for future step-free access.

The replacement platform will be higher and wider than its predecessor, to enable wheelchairs and pushchairs to be directly driven or pushed up a ramp into trains. The gap between the platform edge and train is also being reduced to ease boarding.

The project has received a major boost from leading UK manufacturer of building products Ibstock, which has a factory in Sittingbourne. The group topped-up a grant from Swale Borough Council, providing concrete beams for the new beam-and-block concrete platform – these sit on top of cast concrete piers while pre-cast concrete platform edging was also provided, all delivered free of charge by Seymour Transport Ltd.

S&KLR chairman Liz Fuller told NGW that the use of pre-cast concrete products has been a key factor in allowing the reconstruction of the platform, due to the lack of road access to the station site.

“Beam-and-block construction allowed the materials to be delivered to the railway’s Kemsley Down station, then taken to Sittingbourne Viaduct by train,” Liz said.

“From there it could be directly unloaded into position by the railway’s hard-working volunteer workforce, which had already removed the old platform and installed foundations and cast concrete piers for the first section of new platform, generously funded by member donations.”

The S&KLR continues to raise funds for this and other projects – donations can be made via the website at www.sklr.net. The platform will make its debut when the line’s 2024 season begins at Easter.

Rail freight. Components for the platform replacement were loaded at Kemsley Down (above) and delivered to the site at Sittingbourne. Photos: S&KLR



Fairlie awful weather fails to dampen naming event



Heavy rain did not put off the many guests at the Ffestiniog Railway on 20th October attending the naming ceremony of new-build double-Fairlie 'James Spooner'.

A special train hauled by the new loco ran from Porthmadog to Blaenau Ffestiniog for the ceremony, the footplate crew bravely leaving behind the optional cab roof and going with the open-cab look of the original James Spooner, which was built for the line in 1872 and worked until withdrawn in 1928.

Welcoming guests, Dr David Gwyn, a prime mover in the designation of the Welsh slate industry as a World Heritage Site, paid tribute to the weather, saying; "Rain is a very important part of the tradition of Blaenau Ffestiniog, it wouldn't be fair to bring you here on a sunny day."

Ffestiniog Railway Chairman John Prideaux said that the "newest steam loco in the world," which takes the same number 8 in the roster worn by the original engine, celebrated the memory of James Spooner, engineer to the FR, and the railway. He paid tribute to the "amazing teamwork" at the railway's Boston Lodge works, and to general manager Paul Lewin, who planned the opening celebration but was unable to attend on the day after testing positive for Covid.

FF&WHR chief engineer John Walley explained that the loco was not a replica but a new-build taking design elements from the

original, such as the open middle cab and the distinctive bell,

"The first James Spooner was built in Bristol, the majority of ours here in Wales," John added. "Keeping skills alive to build and maintain a loco like this is very important for our railway to have a sustainable future. It might look a Victorian engine but it is a day-to-day workhorse designed to keep visitors flowing – James Spooner has a job to do helping us explain our heritage to visitors."

The project started in 2016 as an intention to build four new boilers for the double Fairlies, until it became apparent that 1979-built Fairlie 'Earl of Merioneth' was not in good condition. Rather than repair the loco it was decided to build a new one.

The boiler was built by Powys Steel Fabrications near Oswestry. The Covid pandemic badly delayed work on the loco but the pace soon ramped up again, James Spooner making its debut at the FR's Bygones weekend at the start of October.

Above: Local MP Liz Saville-Roberts unveiled the nameplate, with some young assistance.

Photo: Andrew Charman

Below: The new engine has already been much in demand for photo charter work, here posed with its closest sibling in age, the 1992-built 'David Lloyd George' at Boston Lodge on 7th November,

Photo: Joey Evans



BRIEF LINES



Garratt now a WHR loco

NGG16 Garratt no 130 has officially become a Welsh Highland Railway locomotive. Owner Peter Best donated the engine to the railway on 4th October – having been imported from South Africa for the abortive Robin Hood's Bay railway project it went to the Exmoor Steam Railway from where Peter Best purchased it. The loco has been at the WHR since 2015 and entered service in 2021.

Photo: Andrew Charman

Dates for 2024 Manx Fest

While they await the outcome of a review into their future (see story on page 7), the railways and tramways of the Isle of Man are planning the attractions at their 2024 Transport Festival. The island's Government has announced that the latest edition of the popular event will run from 30th July to 4th August – celebrations will include 125 years since the Manx Electric Railway opened from Laxey to Ramsey, the section said to be under threat.

Four medals for Seaton

The Seaton Tramway clocked up an impressive four accolades at the 14th Devon Tourism Awards held on 16th November. The 2ft 9in gauge electric line was awarded gold medals in the Accessible & Inclusive Tourism category and the Experience of the Year for its Story Tram, and gained silver awards in the Large Attraction of the Year and Tourism Event of the Year for its Polar Express tram ride.

Mixed results for Ratty

The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway has reported main-season passenger numbers down around 10 per cent on 2022, a trend it says appears echoed across the country with the cost-of-living crisis and weather having an impact on trading. However the Cumbrian 15-inch gauge line added that its Santa Special services sold out within three days of going on sale – additional trains have been scheduled to cope with the demand from winter visitors.



Llanfair's Tony flags his final train, 50 years on

The end of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's main operating season on Sunday 5th November also marked the end of an era, Guard Tony Thorndike flagging away his last train after more than half a century as a volunteer on the line.

During this time Tony has fulfilled most roles on the mid-Wales line, including several years serving on the board, and is likely best known for discovering and organising the repatriation of Kerr, Stuart 0-6-2T 'Joan' from Antigua in 1971. He retired from the W&L board in 2012 and was made a Vice President in recognition of his years of service.

Following the return of his final train Tony was greeted by an arch of fireman's shovels as he arrived at the tearoom for a celebration with family and railway friends.

W&LLR chairman Steve Clews praised the dedication of Tony to the railway; "On behalf of the company, all our volunteers and all our membership, thank you for an exemplary half-century plus of service to the W&L."

Tony put his many years of service down to the social aspect of working at the W&L; "The thing about this railway is that the members actually own it, and it's a very sociable railway. I've had a wonderful time."



MBE for TR's John

The Talylllyn Railway's veteran engineer John Bate was formerly presented with the MBE at a ceremony held on the TR's Tywyn Wharf station on 26th October.

John was awarded the medal in the King's Birthday Honours List earlier in the year. Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd Edmond Bailey made the presentation with many of John's family, friends and TR colleagues looking on.

John, now 94, joined the TR in its first year of preservation, 1951, and served as its chief engineer for some 30 years, retiring in 1994 but still volunteering to this day. A highlight of his career is TR locomotive no 7 'Tom Rolt', which John designed and built using a 3ft gauge Irish loco as a base.

Photo: Luke Ryan/TR

Graeme takes TR engineering post

The Talylllyn Railway has appointed Graeme Wigglesworth to the role of engineering manager, replacing Chris Smith who in September left after five years in post to work at the standard gauge Churnet Valley Railway.

Graeme spent 20 years in IT but following redundancy, joined the 10¼-inch gauge Wells & Walsingham Light Railway as a seasonal driver. He completed the season as operations manager before becoming engineering manager of the National Tramway Museum at Crich.

He also served on the Heritage Railway Association Business Development Committee for several years and has also been vice-chair of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway Society, a DMU driver, and drivers assistant at the North Norfolk Railway.

Photo: TR



■ The Glyn Valley Tramway Trust has made more significant progress at its Chirk station site since NGW visited early in 2023 to watch the start of tracklaying at the site. The 2ft 3in gauge track has now been extended from the station under Hand Lane Bridge, and in November preparations were being made to install a point connecting the main line to a siding that is already being laid to where the Trust's proposed stock shed will be built.

On 2nd November the Trust welcomed its first piece of owned rolling stock onto the rails at Chirk, when former RNAD van no 5 was delivered to the station, having been refurbished and regauged from 2ft 6in by local firm CJS Engineering. Currently the van is being hand shunted along the rails and seeing service as a useful store.

Photo: GVT



SUBSCRIBE TO

NARROW GAUGE WORLD

The only magazine that puts narrow gauge centre stage!

9 Issues for £34.99

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SUBSCRIBE
WWW.WORLD-OF-RAILWAYS.CO.UK/NGWSUB

Yesterday's history, today's news and tomorrow's projects, Narrow Gauge World magazine is not one to be missed.

SUBSCRIBER PERKS:

- ✓ **9 issues a year**
- ✓ **FREE delivery**
- ✓ **Only £3.88 an issue**

Subscribe now, you don't want to miss out!

T&C'S: UK offer only. Your subscription will be charged at £34.99 by direct debit per year.
Minimum term of 1 year.



Talylllyn plans '75 Appeal' aiming to raise £500,000

The Talylllyn Railway will launch its '75 Appeal' this year, celebrating three quarters of a century since the mid-Wales line reopened as the world's first preserved railway in 1951, and aiming to raise £500,000 for a host of new projects.

Prime candidates for the funding will be the new engineering facilities at Pendre that were detailed in our special feature back in *NGW* 170. Included will be new carriage storage and dedicated maintenance, a paint shop able to be used all-year round and refurbishment of the original historic loco shed and workshop, allowing visitor access.

The railway is also looking to add additional and accessible volunteer accommodation, improve the entrance to Tywyn Wharf station and enlarge the shop, cafe and meeting rooms, as well as launching additional attractions to help visitors understand the TR's history and

heritage, and a community engagement programme to increase visitors both in pure numbers and range.

The appeal is expected to run over five years, with the hope of raising £100,000 in each year, and the railway will be applying for major grants from such bodies as the National Lottery and others. But it is also targeting direct fundraising in the form of attracting one-off donations and regular giving through signing up to a newly-launched 75 Club.

The appeal will be officially launched in the Spring but a dedicated website with donation facilities is already live at www.talyllyn.co.uk/75appeal/

Above: The Talylllyn's heritage will be to the fore in its ambitious new appeal. Joey Evans pictured Barclay 0-4-OWT 'Douglas' on a photo charter at Dolgoch station on 9th November.

Floods and car curtail W&L trains

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway was forced to cancel services on 21st October after heavy rain caused flooding on the mid-Wales 2ft 6in gauge line.

Two weeks later the final weekend of the line's main operating season was placed in jeopardy after a car fell onto the line and damaged the track.

In the early hours of Thursday 2nd November a car left the A458 road between Cwm Lane and Sylfaen Summit, clearing the roadside hedge then crossing a 50-metre wide field and falling onto the track. It ended up some distance beyond the line, its single occupant escaping without serious injury.

Damage to the track stretched to 12 sleeper lengths, and the line was only able to run trains between Llanfair Caereinion and Sylfaen on the Thursday, re-booked passengers being given partial refunds.

On the Friday services were cut back further to Castle Caereinion, giving the W&L track gang full possession of the section. They were able to effect repairs in time for the final weekend of services to operate over the entire line. W&LLR chairman Steve Clews praised their efforts, saying, "we owe the track gang a big debt of thanks".

Other lines also suffered from the heavy rainfall at the end of October. The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway had its line to Dungeness cut by a flooded tunnel at New Romney and in Northumberland the Heatherslaw Light Railway, a regular victim of flooding, lost several days of operations.

Staffordshire's Amerton Railway saw its main station flooded by water from a nearby brook, forcing the line to suspend trains over the weekend of 21st October, and it was a similar story at Bressingham in Norfolk with the 15-inch gauge Waveney Valley line particularly hit.

Barnstaple signal box to return to L&B

The signal box that once stood at the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's Barnstaple Town station is to be re-erected at Blackmoor Gate station.

The box passed into private hands following the closure of the 2ft gauge Devon line in 1935, but has now been acquired by the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust after the owner expressed a desire to return it to rail use.

The box is currently dismantled for relocation to Blackmoor, where the line owns the station site and inn which is operated as a business. The 125-year old structure is said overall to be in a remarkably good condition – it will be displayed by the water tower until track extension reaches Blackmoor after which the intention is to return it to use.



■ Statfold visitors were treated to an impressive fireworks display on 29th October. Hunslet 'Alpha' provided a suitable frame. Photo: Joey Evans



Farewell to Statfold Barn stalwart Roy

All involved with the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust are mourning the passing of Roy Etherington, a well-known figure in the industrial railway arena who died in early November aged 81.

Roy volunteered at Statfold from its earliest days, one of his major roles being as volunteer archivist, during which he catalogued the entire Hunslet Engine Co archive, scanning hundreds of documents, engineering drawings and photos.

Roy also contributed a locomotive to Statfold, building a replica of a mining industry compressed-air loco, which has become known as 'Hissing Sid'.

He was also the author of a number of Industrial Railway Society handbooks and contributed to numerous other publications over many years. **Photo: Andrew Charman**

SA diesel for UK?

NGW understands that a large South African class 91 2ft gauge diesel could soon be heading to the UK from the Sandstone Steam Museum – we hope to have more on this in our next issue.

Lake line celebrates decade of operation



Irish 15-inch gauge line the Diffin Lake Railway has clocked up its 10th year of operation, (reports **Hugh Dougherty**).

The line opened at the Oakfield Park estate of the late Sir Gerry Robinson in County Donegal in 2013. Railway management estimates its steam and diesel-hauled trains have since carried an estimated 300,000 passengers over a twisting 2½-mile route offering visitors views of the estate and lake.

All involved with the Diffin line are very proud to have completed their first decade in service, said DLR director David Fisher. "This year, we'll carry around 60,000 passengers whereas, five years ago, it was 20,000, so our popularity is growing," he added.

"We're the busiest heritage railway in Ireland and the longest miniature line, and of course, being situated just outside Raphoe, which was served by the County Donegal Railway, we pay tribute to that line by painting our closed carriage in CDR livery, while our steam loco, 'Duchess of Diffin', also carries the CDR red. We see ourselves as keeping the railway heritage of Donegal and Ireland very much alive."

Diffin trains are steam hauled on the last Sunday of each month, during the summer season by 0-4-0 'Countess of



Diffin', which was built by the Exmoor Steam Railway. The line also has two diesel locos, Alan Keef Ltd 'Earl of Oakfield', and 'Bishop of Twysden' which was built by James Duncan.

The rail is 14lb to the yard, flat bottomed, with galvanised steel and wooden sleepers, and the line is run under line-of-sight regulations, without signals and with one engine in operation at a time.

Full details of opening dates, train times, fares and Oakfield Park can be obtained at <https://oakfieldpark.com>.

Top: 'Earl of Oakfield' passes the Diffin Lake which gives the line its name.

Photo: Hugh Dougherty

Above: Clearly an Exmoor engine, 'Countess of Diffin' emerges from the reeds. **Photo: DLR**

■ Highlight of the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway's traditional 'End of Season Parade' weekend on 22nd October was this remarkable octuple-header (that's eight, by the way...), led by the weekend's visiting loco, Guest 2-4-2 'Sian' from the Kirklees Light Railway. The weekend also marked the end of an era as the Romney locos used the existing running shed at New Romney for the last time – over the winter it is being demolished and replaced by a new one. **Photo: Steve Town**





■ In the winter many lines take advantage of less frequent operating days to host photo charters, but the Fairbourne Railway has not generally been among them. This year, however, it staged a charter on 11th November and as these two shots by *Andrew Simmonds* show, the event proved well worthwhile, Fairbourne staff telling *NGW* that it resulted in “some of the best photos taken of our line”.

The Ffestiniog Railway is by contrast an old hand at photo charters, but this year it had a new attraction to attract the snappers, a brand-new locomotive in ‘James Spooner’. A masterpiece of timing by the charter organisers allowed *Joey Evans* to capture a remarkable three double-Fairlies in one shot, with ‘David Lloyd-George’ passing by and ‘Merddin Emrys’ on the spiral.



Floods hit Walhalla bridges again



The Walhalla Goldfields Railway in Victoria was forced to cancel trains from 1st December after several days of heavy rainfall damaged one of its trestle bridges.

The rain partially undermined the foundations of one of the piles on Bridge No. 1 over the Stingers Creek, the first bridge crossed after leaving Walhalla. Rock was washed away from the base of one of the piers, while the workshops and loco sheds at the 2ft 6in gauge line's Thomson base were also flooded.

Local MP Wayne Farnham visited the line shortly after the incident to see the damage for himself and promised to raise the WGR's plight with the relevant Government Minister.

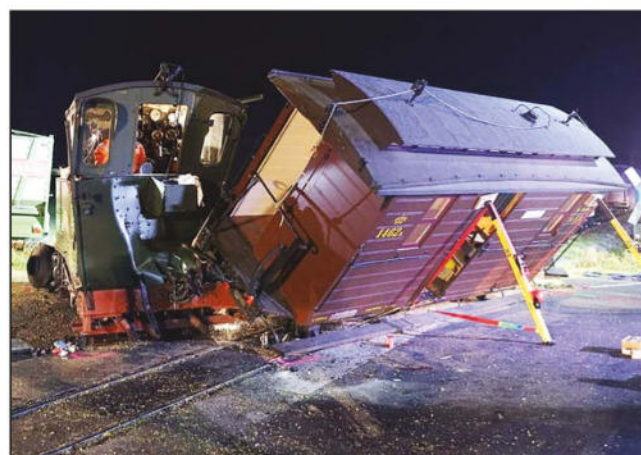
Repairs to the bridge have begun while an appeal has been launched to help cover the estimated \$50,000 cost of the damage and loss

Above: Walhalla district MP Wayne Farnham raised the line's plight in Parliament after seeing the flood damage for himself.

The flooding has washed away rock from under one of the bridge piers. *Photos: WGR*

AUSTRALIA

of income. The incident occurred at the start of the Australian summer and what should be the peak season at Walhalla, and came less than three years after the line was severely damaged by flooding in June 2021.



Crossing crash loco repaired

Replica 750mm gauge 0-6-0T No 54, severely damaged in a level-crossing accident on the Döllnitzbahn in Saxony, GERMANY in September 2022 (NGW170), was expected to return to the line in December.

Repairs at Meiningen loco works, where the loco was built in 2009, have been completed and historic carriages that were damaged in the accident have also been repaired.

BRIEF LINES

Brick arch for Maine loco

The Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum's Portland 0-4-4T no 9, built in 1891, has been fitted with a brick arch to improve its steaming performance. Crews at the US 2ft gauge museum are being trained on the new firing technique.

Less steam on Ziller?

Reports from AUSTRIA suggest that steam services on the 760mm gauge Zillertalbahn will be rather less frequent than in recent years. The 2024 timetable shows a lack of weekend steam and none in the months of May and October.

New trains in Stockholm

New three-car electric multiple-units built by Stadler have entered service on the Roslagsbanan in Stockholm, SWEDEN. In total 22 new EMUs have been ordered for the network with an option for 45 more – with lightweight aluminium bodies, faster acceleration and shorter braking distances, they are the first new trains on the 891mm gauge suburban network in three decades.

Jokioisten marks milestone

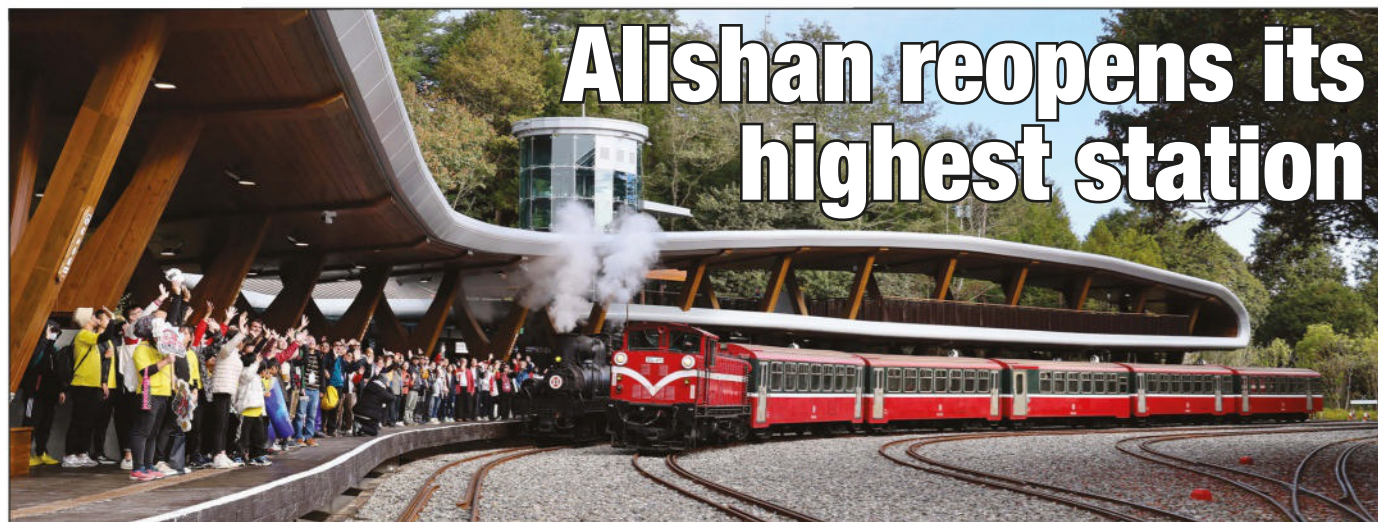
The Jokioisten Museum Railway in FINLAND celebrated a milestone on 9th December, the 125th anniversary of the running of the first scheduled train from Humppila via Jokioinen to Forssa on the Jokioinen railway, part of which the museum line runs on today. The 760mm gauge line closed in 1974 with the museum line established later.

Table turned into art

Sugar producer in Queensland, AUSTRALIA, Mackay Sugar, has donated a redundant turntable from its 600mm gauge railway operations to the local council, so that it could be re-purposed as a decorative, curved section in a foot and bike path that forms part of a mountain bike trail project.



Readers can send in news from overseas lines for inclusion on these pages – contact details are on page 3



Alishan reopens its highest station

The Alishan Forest Railway has reopened Zhushan station, the highest railway station in the Far-East nation, after a three-year rebuilding project.

The station is the terminus of a 6.25-kilometre branch running off the main Alishan line and is likely to become a favourite destination for travellers on early morning trains operated for visitors wanting to watch the sunrise.

The innovative-looking crescent-shaped structure, described as a new landmark for the Alishan province, is the first railway station in Taiwan to be declared one of the country's diamond-rated green buildings.

The structure combines steel, local cypress and acacia, and Japanese redwood in its construction and has been built with intelligent ecological lighting and the ability to collect and store rain water.

The single platform is double-layered and retains a curved format to reflect the heritage of the station, which is 2451 metres above sea level.

On 20th November the Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency which runs

TAIWAN

the Alishan line held an inauguration ceremony for the new station. Guests were conveyed to Zhushan on a train that was double-headed by Shay steam loco SL-31 and Nippon Sharyo diesel DL-41. Then in front of forestry and

railway officials and teachers and students from local elementary schools, elders of the Tsou indigenous group conducted an ancient ritual to bless the station, followed by a tribal song.

Above: Shay SL-31 and diesel DL-41 bring the first train into Zhushan on 20th November.

Upper right: The design of the new building is visually distinctive.

Right: From above the curved design, retaining the heritage of the previous station, is clear to see.

Photos: Albert Wu/AFR



Winter work closes Harz lines

The metre-gauge Harzer Schmalspurbahnen GmbH (HSB) in East **GERMANY** introduced its winter timetables on 1st November with a series of route closures throughout the month to allow maintenance work on the track.

Over the whole of November no trains ran on the Selketalbahn or the central section of the Harzquerbahn between Ilfeld Neanderlinik and Drei Annen Hohne. Trains between Wernigerode, Drei Annen Hohne and the Brocken as well as between Nordhausen and Ilfeld Neanderlinik were not affected by the route closures and operated as scheduled.

From 1st December services resumed over all 140.4km of the Harz network, the Harzquerbahn running railcars and a midday return steam train from Wernigerode to Eisfelder Talmühle.

Steam was also scheduled on the Harzquerbahn every morning from Nordhausen via Benneckenstein, Sorge and Misery to the Brocken, returning from the mountain in the early afternoon. Up to six trains a day were working to the highest Harz peak in the winter timetable and scheduled to expand to nine over the Christmas holidays.

Train services on the Selketalbahn between Quedlinburg, Alexisbad, Harzgerode, Stiege, Hasselfelde and Eisfelder Talmühle also resumed from 1st December, exclusively with railcars except



from Friday lunchtimes to Sunday afternoons when steam was rostered. From 16th December, daily steam operations were scheduled to return to the Selketalbahn.

Information about the new winter timetable is available on the HSB web homepage at www.hsb-wr.de.

Above: Steam was set to play a prime role when Harz services resumed after winter closures for maintenance. *Photo: Volker Schadach/HSB*

Sibiu line marks National Day



The latest progress on the Sibiu to Agnita Railway in **ROMANIA** saw the 2ft 6in gauge line stage a highly successful event between 30th November and 2nd December to celebrate the Eastern European country's National Day (*reports Harry Billmore*).

Known locally as the Mocănița, the line currently runs between Cornățel and Hosman, a distance of 7km, and over the three-day event the route was operated by the 1915-built Manning Wardle 1877,

ROMANIA

colloquially known as 'Vlad' and owned by Bill Parker of The Flour Mill workshop in the Forest of Dean. As reported in **NGW179**, Bill has supported the railway since its revival in 2006 and encouraged the efforts of its volunteers and two paid staff to operate and extend it.

The event's success was helped by unseasonably warm weather, the line seeing enough visitors to require the use of one of

its summer carriages with no sides on the last day – no-one complained and there were lots of happy faces all around the line. ■ Harry will be providing a full report of the challenges currently involved in running steam on the Sibiu line in next month's issue.

A full train of happy passengers at Hosman testifies to the success of the Sibiu to Agnita Railway's latest operating weekend.

Photo: Harry Billmore

Berlin park loop revival progress

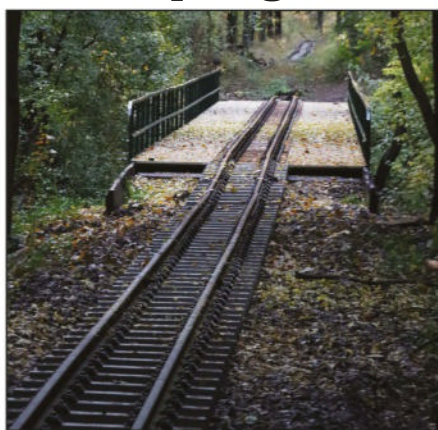
Work to restore a disused section of line on the Berlin Parkeisenbahn in **GERMANY** is nearing completion (*reports Jonathan James*).

The 600mm gauge line opened in 1956 as a 'Pioneer Railway' and operates in a large park at Wuhlheide in the east of the German capital. The railway has a direct connection with the main-line network, the S-Bahn Line 3 at Wuhlheide.

Since we last reported on the rebuild in **NGW179** work has been continuing on the section of line via Betriebsbahnhof station, which had been disused for several years. Most of the track between the new bridge and the junction near Stadion station has been completed and ballast laid. There is still some work to complete on the section from the new bridge towards the north loop towards Badeseer station.

The platform at the former Betriebsbahnhof station has now been rebuilt, although refurbishment of the station building is still underway. This station will be renamed 'Haus Natur und Umwelt' when the section reopens, expected to be sometime in 2024.

During our visit trains were initially being hauled by 0-6-0 diesel no 199 'Gunther' (102-5/1971), but it failed and had to return to the depot. V10C diesel no 199 'Gernot', (101-7/1969), was brought from the depot as a replacement.



Above: Track has been relaid up as far as the new bridge.

The rebuilt platform at Betriebsbahnhof, covered in leaves on 29th October.

Photos: Jonathan James



New train arrives at mountain line

The first of three brand-new trains have been delivered to the Lauterbrunner-Mürren Mountain Railway, the Bergbahn Lauterbrunnen-Mürren (BLM), a metre-gauge railway and cableway in the Bernese Oberland area of **SWITZERLAND**.

The trio of two-car electric units, which will replace units dating from 1967, have been ordered from Stadler Rail, the climax of a six-year reconstruction project on the line that has cost 63 million Swiss Francs. The first arrived at the end of October but the other two will not join it until May this year due to supply bottlenecks blamed on the Covid pandemic and war in Ukraine.

The line's operators say that the new units will not only offer improved accessibility but will also be faster, allowing services at 15-minute intervals on the 4.3km line, which climbs to 1,638 metres. The line provides a vital link to the resort village of Mürren, which has poor road access, and trains have regularly been rostered with a freight wagon ahead of the passenger car and propelled by it.

Transport of the new unit was challenging, the final miles to the BLM being up a single-track road with hairpin bends, the car mounted on a special tractor with large crane units following it!

Locomotives of the Exmoor Steam Railway



James Waite has been granted rare access to a Devon family enterprise that has built more than 50 magnificent locos in many different gauges.

The locos built by the Exmoor Steam Railway have become well-known and highly respected for the robustness of their construction, their trim lines and a distinct family likeness. The railway was conceived by Trevor and June Stirland and their children Tony and Julie as a tourist attraction at their home on the western edge of Exmoor near Bratton Fleming, a village better known among narrow gauge enthusiasts for its station on the late-lamented Lynton & Barnstaple Railway.

The site, at the delightfully-named Cape of Good Hope Farm, lies on high, steeply-sloping ground, and the source of the River Bray, a tributary of the Taw, lies within its boundaries. The line was originally built to 7¼-inch gauge, but a visit to the Fairbourne Railway, then recently

converted to 12¼in, introduced the Stirlands to the comfortable closed carriages which its gauge allowed, much more suitable for the fickle Exmoor weather. They changed their line to 12¼in, and it has remained that way ever since.

A large and well-equipped workshop was an integral part of the project, and from the start all engineering has been handled in-house. This included construction of its locos – the first was a 4-4-2T, appropriately named 'Bray Valley', built in 1989 as a 7¼in machine and converted to 12¼in once the decision was made to go for the wider gauge. It became works number 189, perhaps to reflect the year of its building.

This pretty little loco set the standard for all the machines which would follow, with their robust

Above: Exmoor Steam Railway's first loco – 10¼in gauge 4-4-2T 'Tryfan', formerly 'Bray Valley', today on Michael Whitehouse's private garden railway. Photo: C.M. Whitehouse

Below: 12¼in gauge 0-4-2T 'Lorna Doone' has always been based at Exmoor. It and 15in gauge 'Ellie' were built as a pair and left the works one day apart. Ellie is now at the Lappa Valley Railway.

construction and unmistakable Exmoor look. It was designed by Tony when he was just 18 years old, an amazing feat by a remarkably talented engineer. He conceived and executed the design entirely in his head without any drawings, as he has for all the workshop's subsequent locos. He is very much the leading light at Exmoor.

Larger locomotives

The railway opened to the public in August 1990. Something bigger than Bray Valley was needed, and the workshop built 2-8-0T no 190 'Yeo Valley', still its only eight-coupled loco, followed in 1991 by 0-6-0T no 191 'Lorna Doone'. Any loco builder based on Exmoor had to have a Lorna Doone, and over the years the workshop has produced two!

Bray Valley was later converted to 10¼in and renamed 'Tryfan'; it now belongs to Michael Whitehouse, the well-known railway author. Several Exmoor locos have had more than one gauge, but this is the only one to have had three.

Two 12¼in 2-4-2Ts, nos 293 'Exmoor' and 294 'River Churnet', were built as a pair in 1993. The jump in numbering perhaps reflected their significance as the first locos to be built for sale. Exmoor went to a private buyer in Surrey, though more than 20 years later Tony bought it back. River Churnet, later 'Excalibur', was soon rebuilt to 10¼in for what is now the Leek and Rudyard Railway. This line became a loyal customer, buying 2-4-2T no 296 'Merlin' in 1996 and the chunky



0-6-2T no 324 'King Arthur' in 2005. No 297 'Pendragon', previously 12¼in 'Ashorne', went there secondhand, but has recently moved to the new Astbury Light Railway near Congleton.

The 0-6-0T no 295 'Spirit of Adventure' was completed later in 1993 for Michael Croft's Perrygrove Railway in the Forest of Dean. It was Exmoor's first 15in gauge loco, and has run there ever since. By then loco building for outside customers was well-established; four more were completed between 1994 and 1998 along with no 299 'Denzil' which stayed at Exmoor and became the mainstay of operations on the railway for many years. After a period out of service it is currently under overhaul.

The year of 1999 saw completion of the first 7¼in gauge loco for sale, 0-4-2T no 304 'Gillian' going to a private buyer in Worcestershire, and it was soon followed by more. It was not long before 7¼in machines became a significant part of the business and at least 17 have now been built.

The fifth, no 308 'Samastipur', operated for some years at the Crogga Valley Railway near Port Soderick on the Isle of Man. Renamed 'Jools', it is now at the Beer Heights Miniature Railway in East Devon. It acquired notoriety locally when, sadly, its trainee driver was injured by a blow-out from a fusible plug, though far from being a construction fault it was evidence that the plug worked properly.

Another significant order arrived in 2001 for construction of the 12¼in Exbury Gardens Railway in the New Forest and its rolling stock, together with 0-6-2T no 315 'Rosemary'. Sister no 316 'Naomi' followed a year later while Denzil also moved briefly to Exbury until Naomi was completed. Like the gardens the railway is immensely popular, and is perhaps the best-known user of Exmoor's products.

On a sadder note the decision was taken in 2001 to close the Exmoor railway to the public, so that the business could concentrate full-time on outside work. It was, however, retained for private use and has since been extended. The original Lorna Doone was sold that year and is now at the Littlehampton Miniature Railway where it is known as 'Christopher'. The 0-4-2T no 330, built for the Exmoor railway in 2006, took the Lorna Doone name and is still based there.

Missed chance

Perhaps Exmoor's finest machines are the 12¼in 2-6-2s nos 325 (2009), nameless at first but later 'Black



Above: 12¼in 2-4-2T 'Exmoor' worked for many years at a private railway near Guildford, Surrey before returning to Exmoor.

Right: Superb 16mm scale live-steam model of 2-6-2 'Black Beauty' in original condition before it was named. It was built by a skilled enthusiast in Yorkshire. Photo: James Waite collection



Below: 12¼in 2-6-2 'Mariloo' stands at Exbury Central station on 8th May 2008, five days after delivery from Exmoor and four days after it was named by the late Queen. Note the smart style of numberplate, also applied to 'Black Beauty'.

Beauty', and 326 (2008) 'Mariloo'. The former ran at Exmoor for some years before moving to the Ree Park Safari, near Ebeltoft in Denmark. Mariloo was built for Exbury, and Black Beauty was also a visitor there. On 4th May 2008 I intended to visit the gardens but the weather was poor and I didn't go. I knew at once that I'd missed the scoop of a lifetime when I opened the newspaper the following morning! There was a photo of Leo de Rothschild, very much the driving force behind the railway, driving the new Mariloo, with the late Queen riding with him in its cab after naming it, and looking

as though she was having the time of her life. Her Majesty was a personal friend of Leo and on a previous visit had ridden on 'Rosemary'.

Statfold, surely every narrow gauge enthusiast's Shangri La, now has an Exmoor loco, 12¼in 2-4-2T no 332 'Victoria'. It was built for a narrow gauge project at Tintern which never came to fruition, and after overhaul at Exmoor now operates on the Staffordshire centre's new Mease Valley Light Railway.

Exmoor's earlier products were exclusively tank engines, although some were given auxiliary tenders. Black Beauty and Mariloo were the





first true tender locos. The 10¼in 0-4-2 no 342 'Jack', built in 2016 for the Delamont Miniature Railway in Northern Ireland, and 7¼in 2-4-0s nos 340 and 341 'Sapphire', both built in 2021, are three more. Sapphire runs at the Pugneys Light Railway in Wakefield along with a 2000-built loco, 0-4-2T no 307 'Jane'. No 340 is still at Exmoor.

Several other lines have more than one Exmoor loco. The 10¼in 0-4-2Ts nos 319 'Pulborough' and 334 'Peggy', built in 2004 and 2007 respectively, are at the South Downs Light Railway in West Sussex. Steve Bell's 15in 0-4-0T+T no 312 'St Egwin', the first built with an auxiliary tender in 2003, has always been based at the Evesham Vale Light Railway. In 2009 it was joined by 0-4-2T no 300 'Monty' of 1996 vintage, which came secondhand from the Markeaton Park Light Railway in Derby.

The 15in Lappa Valley Railway in Cornwall has two secondhand 0-4-2Ts, 1997-built no 302 'Ruby' and 331 'Ellie' of 2006. No fewer than four 0-4-2Ts, all secondhand, are at the 7¼in Barnards Miniature Railway in Essex. They include the

2011-built no 337 'Bernada von Barnards', one of two Exmoor products to be styled after Orenstein & Koppel locos; the other is in private ownership.

Finally there are two 'one-offs'. The experimental 12¼in 0-4-4-0 Kitson Meyer tank loco no 298 'Exmoor Ranger' would have been by far Exmoor's most distinctive product. It was approaching completion in 2011, but sadly pressure of other work meant it was never finished. Eventually it became a parts donor for other locos.

There's also 2ft gauge no 320/2004 'Dame Ann', a classic North Wales Quarry Hunslet, and as such it's one of the few locos into which Tony had little design input from the point of view of aesthetics. It predates the Quarry Hunslets built at Statfold, and incorporates several technical modifications from the original Hunslet design – notably it's an 0-4-2ST.

This loco was built for a Quarry Hunslet admirer who set up the Wales West theme park in Alabama, and has run there ever since. A few fortunate UK enthusiasts met it when it was tested at the Launceston Steam

Above: A 10¼in gauge 0-4-2T on the left and a 7¼in 0-4-2T await completion.

Below: This 7¼in 2-4-0 tender loco is privately owned.

Facing page, top: 10¼in 2-4-0 'Jack' belongs to the Delamont Light Railway near Killyleagh in County Down, Northern Ireland. It returned to the Exmoor works for overhaul and was awaiting collection by its owners. The red loco behind it is one of Exmoor's standard 7¼in 0-4-2T locos.

Photos by James Waite, taken 15th September 2023, except where stated

Railway, but going to visit it now would require a major expedition!

Other overseas-based locos include the 2003-built 15in 0-4-2T no 317 'The Duchess of Difflin' at the late Sir Gerry Robinson's Difflin Lake Railway in County Donegal, and 7¼in no 322 'Brasken' of 2006, which is at the Mutebo Aspñäs Miniaturjárnväg in Sweden.

Great and small

At the other end of the narrow gauge scale, Exmoor also saved five South African 2ft gauge Garratts and a Kalahari 2-8-2. I first became aware of the business one winter when I was driving to the preserved Lynton & Barnstaple at Woody Bay and the leaves were off the trees. The road from the M5 motorway passes Cape of Good Hope Farm, and I caught a glimpse of the Garratts through the hedge. Two of them, NGG16 nos 87 and 130, now run on the Welsh Highland Railway. Of the others, NGG13 no 77 (Hanomag 10629/1928) has been superbly restored in the distinctive blue livery it once carried on the Estcourt-Weenen line in KwaZulu Natal, and would need only a little attention to become operational once more.

The workshop hasn't been immune to demand for diesels and it has produced five. Four-wheel 'Eddy' was constructed for Exbury in 2001 on the frames of a Hunslet 2ft gauge loco. One more conventional diesel, plus two steam-outline 0-4-2Ts, followed between 2016 and 2019, all for customers who already operated Exmoor steam locos. No 349, a third 0-4-2T, currently awaits completion. It looks every inch a typical Exmoor machine, and only close inspection reveals that it's a diesel.

The first few Exmoor steam locos were relatively low-slung, but the Stirlands soon began to build out to much larger dimensions. They sometimes spark debate as to whether they are truly narrow gauge machines or are miniatures. Perhaps it is better just to enjoy them as superb little locos in their own right. They attract increasing numbers of admirers. I'm one of them! Black Beauty has inspired a miniature of its own, a 16mm live steam model recently built by a skilled enthusiast in Yorkshire. It looks magnificent, and is even more of an achievement because, of course, there were no drawings to assist him.

In addition to his carrying out his design work Tony constructs the frames, rods and valve gear of the locos, and also assembles the sheet metalwork, cab, tanks, lagging and pipework. Trevor handles the machining and makes wheels, axles,



pins, bushes, cylinders and pistons.

When a loco is mechanically complete it is completely stripped down and the parts are grit blasted, another of Trevor's responsibilities, before receiving at least six coats of spray paint – the secret behind the superb appearance always associated with Exmoor's products. The boilers, meanwhile, are a joint effort – Trevor is a coded welder and has built more than 60 over the years.

Major supplier

Julie moved away to Wales in 2012 and is now the works administrator at Boston Lodge on the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway. Trevor and June would like to reduce their work commitments, and Exmoor will probably scale down its output – though there are no plans to cease production altogether and when I visited a most interesting new machine was in course of construction. Well over 50 locos have been built during more than 30 years – I'm a Devonian, and know of no previous locomotive builders in the county, but Exmoor has more than put this omission to rights! Its magnificent products will doubtless continue to grace the narrow gauge railways of the UK and beyond for many years to come.

I'm most grateful to the Stirlands for all their help, kindness and hospitality, without which these articles would not have been possible. A final note – please bear in mind that this is the Stirlands' home and respect their need for privacy, and also that pressure of work means that visitors cannot be accommodated. **NGW**

■ The next issue of **NGW** will feature the South Downs, Rudyard and Astbury railways – three 10¼in gauge lines that are operated by Exmoor locos.



Right: The boiler of SAR NGG13 class 2ft gauge 2-6-2+2-6-2 Garratt no 77 has been refurbished, and it awaits some copper pipework before it can run again. Unofficially repainted blue for several years in the 1970s, it has been restored in this livery.

Below: SAR 2ft Franco-Belge NG15 2-8-2 no 135 and Beyer, Peacock NGG16 2-6-2+2-6-2 no 115 stand outside the workshop.



One hundred years young

Michael Chapman wishes the Mikado K28 class a happy birthday, celebrating the centenary of what has become one of the most enduring of all American narrow gauge locomotives.

When you consider 100-year-old steam locomotives, it's easy to think about polished Victorian brass, elegant lining and historic engines such as those on the Ffestiniog Railway. But time moves on; 100 years ago was 1923 – a comparatively modern date in locomotive terms.

What did a brand-new state-of-the-art locomotive look like a century ago? Built by the American Locomotive Works (ALCO) of Schenectady, New York, the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad's 2-8-2s, known as the K-28s, form a prime example.

The 'K' stands for Mikado with a 2-8-2 wheel arrangement and '28'

refers to the 28,000lb of tractive effort. A batch of ten were ordered by the D&RGW to complement and replace its earlier Consolidation locomotives. Numbered 470 to 479, they were delivered at a time when the railroad was undertaking the last extensive improvements to its antiquated narrow-gauge empire.

The first K-28 to work on the D&RGW was no 473, which on 2nd October 1923 ran over the lofty heights of the 10,800ft Marshall Pass from Salida to Sargents. The K-28s became the pride of the D&RGW's narrow-gauge fleet and handled the most important jobs, including the San Juan and Shavano passenger

Main photo: 473 at Rockwood, 14 miles north of Durango in July 2016. Note the smokestack with its 'deep-fat-fryer' spark arrestor used when burning coal.

Below left: 476 on a bridge near Durango. The plain stovepipe chimney was fitted when D&SNGR locos were converted to oil-firing.

trains. Drivers and firemen dubbed them 'sports models' owing to their power, strength and flexibility.

In late 1941 after 18 years of service, America was on the brink of entering World War 2 and the US Government was seeking railroad equipment for use on the White Pass & Yukon Railroad to help with construction of the Alcan Highway and pipeline in Alaska. Seven of the DRG&W's fleet of ten K-28 locos were sent north. They were employed for three years of intensive work and then were scrapped.

Throughout the war the D&RGW retained K-28 locos 473, 476 and 478. They were employed



Right: Variations in K28 cab layouts. No 478, on display in Durango Roundhouse Museum retains its conventional coal-fired firebox arrangement. On 476 there are no firebox doors for shovelling coal but the red glow from the atomised burning oil can be seen through the inspection cover.

Photos by Michael Chapman, all taken September 2023 except where stated



mainly on the Silverton branch until sold to the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in 1981. With the distinctive Westinghouse brake cylinder mounted on the smokebox door, the K-28s are instantly recognisable and have become iconic at the Durango & Silverton line.

No 473 remains in service today on the D&SNGR, and on 16th and 17th October 2023 took part in centennial celebrations along with sister engine no 476.

On the first day, 473 headed a lengthy consist of passenger and freight cars with 476 cut in as mid-train helper, recreating operations that have not been seen since at least the

1950s. On the second day the two locomotives worked separate freight and passenger formations.

Survival of the fittest

Since 1923 no 473 has achieved the remarkable record of never being out of service for longer than two years. In 2020 it was converted to burning reclaimed fuel oil rather than coal and 476 followed suit a year later.

K28 no 478, out of service since 2016 and currently on display in »



LOCOMOTIVES



Left: K28 no 476 running along the High Line through dramatic scenery on the Durango & Silverton route .

Below: Front end of 476 with the distinctive Westinghouse brake cylinder mounted on the smokebox door.

Durango Roundhouse Museum, is slated for similar conversion within the next three years. These changes represent a determination to minimise fire risk and at the same time safeguard the future of the now legendary K-28s.

More Information

Fans of the K-28s are encouraged to seek-out the recently published hardback book *Rio Grande's Narrow Gauge K-28 Locomotives* by Jerry B Day. It contains 300 photos, maps and diagrams, including a three-page foldout drawing created by Mike McKenzie for this 288 page volume.



Winter chills are also warmers

Winter is a time of photo charters because the railways are less busy and the weather can also throw up some very special lighting conditions – you never know what you are going to get next...

Right: Monochrome is not merely black and white, but a whole atmospheric sub genre of its own, whether in the dying rays of sunlight, as *Karl Heath* captured with Tallylyn Railway no 3 'Sir Haydn' on 10th November...

Below: ...or in the gloom of a foggy morning, as captured here by *Andrew Simmonds* on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway on 31st October.

Overleaf: No doubt about it, Britain has plenty of narrow gauge grandeur. Almost lost as the early morning mist rose on Friday 3rd November, Vale of Rheidol no 8 'Llewellyn' was working the line's carmine and cream set towards Devil's Bridge. *Ian Whitehead* got the shot on a David Williams/Bob Branch organised photo-charter, having done things right by asking a local farmer for permission to stand in his field.



NARROW GAUGE WORLD







Above: If ever there was more indication needed that winter provides some particularly special lighting conditions, then this picture from the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway's End of Season gala weekend provides it. *Photo: Steve Town*

Below: It's not all in the UK either! On 30th September the Selfkantbahn in Germany organised its yearly harvest festival and for the first time in a number of years managed to have a steam loco operational. *Sjors van Dongen* considered this reason enough for a sunrise photo charter where luckily the weather gods proved very kind. Sjors also told us that he figured that it would be a little bit criminal to not share the picture with us, for which we are grateful!



Polish Narrow Gauge in the 1990s



In the first of two articles, Phil Horton sets the scene and covers visits to two 600mm gauge lines.

Following the fall of the 'Iron Curtain' in 1989 many British enthusiasts, including the author, travelled east in search of steam's last strongholds in eastern Europe. One of the most popular destinations was Poland as steam traction was then still widely used on both freight and passenger traffic.

My first visit was as part of a TEFS group in March 1990 during which I met a young Polish enthusiast, Marcin Matacz, who acted as our local guide for the tour. I later corresponded with him and managed to arrange two further visits for myself in August 1991 and July/August 1993, when we were joined by my long-term enthusiast friend Neil Carter. This article describes the narrow-gauge railways encountered, some of which had recently closed.

The present day borders of Poland were only established after World War Two. The country then gained a significant amount of territory from Germany to its west, adding to that gained from both Germany and Austria at the end of World War One. However a comparable area of former Polish territory to the east was lost to the Soviet Union. As a result the country ended up with a great variety of railway equipment, both standard and narrow gauge.

The Polish State Railways (Polski Koleje Państwowe/ PKP) was first established in 1918 but became part of the German Deutsche Reichsbahn (DR) in 1939. It was reformed after 1945 to run the railways across the

new Poland, as it does today. As Marcin lived in Wrocław (until 1945 the German town of Breslau) all but one of the lines we visited had been in Germany until either 1918 or 1945. The exception was the 750mm »

Above: Class Px48 0-8-0s became widely used on the Polish narrow gauge following their introduction in 1948. No 1920, of 750mm gauge, is resting outside Sroda shed, 2nd August 1993.

Photos by Phil Horton, all taken 26th July 1991 except where stated





line at Przeworsk visited in March 1990, which was Austrian until 1918. Polish names are used here, except when translating the name of the original railway.

By 1950 the PKP included a large network of narrow-gauge lines of five different gauges. The two most extensive were the 600mm and 750mm gauge systems running to some 750km and 1130km

respectively. Many 600mm gauge lines had been converted to 750mm gauge since 1945 but this initiative was not completed before the lines closed, a procedure which was well underway by 1990.

Many of the PKP's narrow-gauge steam engines were built in southern Poland by the firm Chrzanow, both before and after World War 2. During the war this became the

German firm of Krenau which produced many standard gauge 'Kriegsloks' using slave labour.

In 1948 the re-established Chrzanow factory introduced the sturdy Class Px48/Px49, mainly for its 750mm lines. This was a slightly enlarged version of its Class Px29 – the '48', '49' and '29' indicate the year that the class was introduced. The classes Px48 and Px49 differ in that the former have bogie tenders, the latter three-axled ones.

Further engines were built for Romania but dieselisation started in the 1960s with the introduction of the Bucharest-built Class Lxd2 B-B diesel-hydraulics. This class was also widely used in Romania and other Eastern Bloc countries; the last were built around 1987. By this time they had been joined by Class Lyd2 0-6-0 diesel-hydraulics, also built in Bucharest between 1976 and 1982.

As with its standard steam engines the PKP appreciated the important heritage of its diverse stock and as early as 1970 locos were being identified for preservation. Some of these were displayed at Warsaw's main station (Warszawa Główna).

During the 1970s three narrow-gauge railway museums were established at Wenecja (Znin) for 600mm gauge locos, Sochaczew for those of 750mm gauge and Gryfice for the 1000mm gauge. The only one I visited was at Wenecja in July 1991. There is not space in this article to describe the 20 or so preserved steam engines, many of which were then unrestored (details can be found on <https://www.steamlocomotive.info/poland.cfm>). My descriptions of the lines encountered start with the 600mm gauge and end with the 785mm gauge system at Bytom.

Znin to Gasawa & Rogowa

Znin is situated on the standard gauge line between Damasławek and Inowrocław. The 19km of 600mm gauge track between Znin and Rogowa first opened in 1894 and was then extended by 13km to Osno. As usual in Poland the narrow-gauge trains used their own station, Znin Wask (Wask means Narrow (gauge)), which was adjacent to the standard gauge one, Znin Miasto (Miasto meaning City).

Further branch lines were opened, including that to Gasawa and Szelejewo, after which the whole system extended to some 78km. It became part of the PKP in 1949 when it carried heavy passenger and freight traffic. Passenger services ended in 1962 and sections of it were closed completely between then and 1992. The heritage trains started in 1976, running over the 12km from



Above: PKP 0-6-0 diesel-hydraulic Lyd2-20 arrives at Wenecja on the 600mm Gasawa to Znin Wask line.

Left: Classed as a 'museum loco', PKP 0-8-0 Px38-805, built by Chrzanow in 1938, stands in Znin Wask station.

Below: Px38-805 runs round its train at Znin Wask prior to returning to Gasawa.



Znin as far as Gasawa. These called at Wenecja, 7km from Znin and home to the railway museum.

When I visited on 25th July 1991 two locos were working the museum trains between Znin and Gasawa, diesel Lyd2.20 and pre-war 0-8-0 tender engine Px38.805 (Chrzanow, 1938). On arrival at Gasawa behind 805 we found signs that the line was still in use for freight as agricultural lime was being unloaded from a long line of 600mm gauge open wagons. We then travelled by car to Rogowa which had once been on the mainline to Osno, where we found further wagons. The heritage trains still run today on the museum line at Znin but Px38.805 is thought currently to be under repair.

Witaszyce to Zagorow

Returning from Znin to my friend's home at Wroclaw in July 1991 we passed the town of Witaszyce on the main line from Jarocin to Ostrow. Here a 600mm gauge line had once run some 50km northwards to Zagorow. The first 20km between Witaszyce and Robakowo was opened by the Jarocin Railway in 1902 and was extended during World War 2 to Trabczyn (45km). The line to Zagorow, which left the Trabczyn line at Grabina, opened in 1947.

The railway was taken over by PKP two years later. The Grabina to Trabczyn line was the first to close in 1979 while that between Witaszyce and Zagorow lasted until December 1990. It was subsequently claimed to have been the last state-run 600mm line to carry both freight and passenger traffic in Europe. By then its steam engines had long been replaced by railcars and five class Lyd2 0-6-0 diesel-hydraulics. One of the steam engines which worked the line, Jarocin no 5, became PKP no Tyb5-471 (Borsig 8741, 1913). Although transferred away from the line in the 1950s, we had seen it at the Wenecja museum in an, as yet, unrestored condition.

When we visited the depot two

Above: Second terminus of the 600mm gauge line from Znin in 1991 was at Rogowa, once on the narrow-gauge main line to Osno. These wagons indicated that freight traffic was still carried.

Right: Tyb5-471, which formerly worked the line from Witaszyce to Zagorow, in an unrestored state. It has since been cosmetically restored at the Wenecja museum.

Below: Sorry sight at Witaszyce on 27th July 1993, almost three years after closure of the 600mm gauge line from Zagorow. Lost among the weeds is a Lyd2 loco, three of which went to the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway.

years later on 27th July 1993 the grass-covered track still contained much of the line's rolling stock including one of the Lyd2 diesels. Three of the line's Lyd2 locos, 58, 60 and 69, were acquired by the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway in 1993 and moved to Wales. No 60, now named 'Eryri', is believed to be in running order while the other two are reported as awaiting repairs. **NGW**

■ This feature will continue next month with the 750mm gauge lines, beginning with the Przeworsk Waski – Dynow railway that has now been reopened. The feature on this line in **NGW** 180 omitted photo credits for the flood damage (courtesy Rzeszów District Council) and 13th August celebrations (courtesy Przeworsk District Council), for which we offer our apologies.



Rheidol on a Roll



Development at the Vale of Rheidol Railway continues apace – *Andrew Charman* gets a preview inside the new museum and events space opening this year.

Regular readers of *NGW* cannot fail to be aware of the enormous progress and expansion made by the Vale of Rheidol Railway (VoR) in recent years, an extensive programme typified by new workshops and enhanced and additional rolling stock.

That programme is very much continuing into 2024, as well as likely expanding into a second line with the

acquisition of the Brecon Mountain Railway reported in our news pages. In early November we took a trip to Aberystwyth, partly to see the new, large station building, but mainly to enjoy a preview of the museum and events space that the VoR has been creating in its former standard-gauge two-road engine shed.

This shed was last employed by

Above: A view of the museum and events space that the shed's former users would not recognise. Note the multiple track gauges.

Left: One item from 'Collection X' was on display, this unrestored standard gauge Dick Kerr petrol loco built in 1918 for war service.

Below: The Model T Ford was built for the late Adrian Shooter's Beeches Light Railway.

Facing page top left: The sustainable cut-wood flooring is not fixed and easily replaced.

All photos: Andrew Charman

London Midland Region in 1965, the VoR then using it as its MPD until 2019 when the resident locos moved into the running shed built into the new workshop development.

Since then the VoR has been refurbishing the former shed for its new role as a multi-function display shed and museum, displaying items mainly gathered by the late Peter Rampton, the line's former owner.

The work has involved replacing part of one wall with enormous windows and sandblasting and repainting the interior, this producing a light, airy environment that any footplate crew who worked in the old shed would not recognise. The roof has been fitted with a large solar-panel array while decorative stonework that was once part of London Bridge Station will form a new entrance to the building.

For the preview event the vehicles on show were mainly those currently available for use on the VoR, though the roster did include Arn Jung 0-6-2 'Graf Schwerin-Löwitz' (1261/1908). This engine single-handedly maintained services on the Brecon Mountain Railway for more than 15 years before being made redundant by the line's extension and need for more powerful locos. VoR managing director Llŷr ap Iolo told *NGW* that the line had acquired the loco in 2022 at a time when there was a threat of it being sold to Germany.

The X-factor

Many enthusiasts are looking forward to the museum displaying items from the collection gathered over many years by Peter Rampton, including several rare examples of narrow gauge locos. These were stored on a farm in Surrey with no public access, soon





becoming known among enthusiasts as 'Collection X'. Just one of these was on show at the preview, a standard-gauge Dick Kerr Petrol loco built for the War Department in 1918, its unrestored condition lending it a highly attractive patina.

The new museum will officially open later this year, by which time it will also boast a cafe. It is without doubt a major addition to the attractions at the VoR's main terminus, and enthusiasts will certainly be looking forward to the formal opening, and wondering just what will be on display. Rest assured we at **NGW** will be first in the queue to find out! **NGW**

Above: Former Brecon Mountain Railway loco 'Graf Schwerin-Löwitz' has found a new home in mid Wales rather than Germany.

Right: New look – 2-6-2 'Llewelyn' has been turned out in British Rail black. Suggestions that one of the locos should wear the controversial BR 'Rail Blue' brought the reply "Never say never.."



First-class craftsmanship...

■ On display at the VoR's preview event was one of the line's recently heavily refurbished carriages, giving **NGW** the opportunity to take a good look at an astonishing transformation that has taken place in their interiors.

Built originally in 1938 by the Great Western Railway, the two vehicles were relaunched in May 2022 and Spring 2023, each costing £120,000 to rebuild.

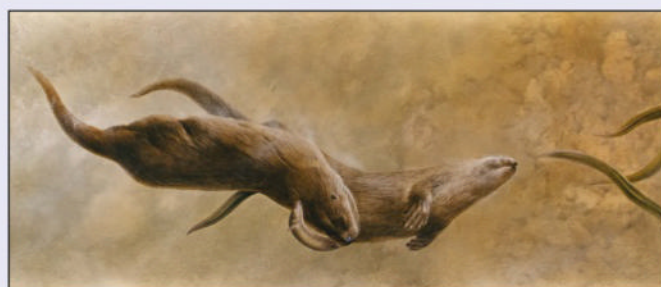
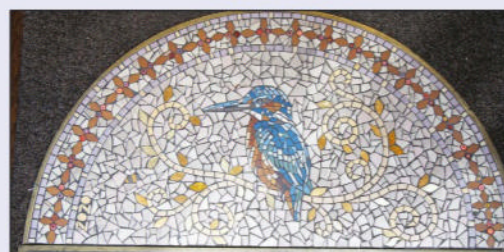
The pair have been turned out as first-class vehicles – on the day of our visit the other was earning its keep on the day's service trains. One wears Great Western Railway custard and cream livery and the other British Rail-era crimson-lake and cream.

The two are intended to be observation cars and have received

completely rebuilt interiors with individual armchairs for occupants. Exquisitely detailed wood panelling and inlays abound, but the highlights are the moquettes, designs chosen by Peter Rampton before his passing.

The floor-mounted mosaics and roof panels feature local wildlife, one vehicle having a theme of water and the other of flight. The roof panels have been painted by renowned wildlife artist Terence Lambert and are remarkable to view.

The two carriages really have to be seen to be fully appreciated and with their launch it is clear that the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge Carriage Works now has a rival for top-quality craftsmanship...



Rails around the Clay Pit

Donald Brooks takes a close look at the West Lancashire Light Railway, less than a quarter of a mile long but still faithfully reflecting the visions of a group of teenagers who founded it back in the 1960s.



Above: 'Sybil' on test following an eight-year long restoration and is double-heading fellow ex-Dinorwic loco, 'Irish Mail'. 8th October 2023.

Below: 'Clwyd', The WLLR's first loco double-heads an ex-Southport Pier Railway carriage with an unidentified Simplex. Following is no 5, RH 200478 of 1940 formerly at Liverpool Waterworks. 21st May 1977.

In the 1960s the attention of many railway enthusiasts was focused on the end of British Railways standard gauge steam. Scarcely noticed by comparison was the equally rapid decline in industrial narrow gauge railways, replaced by road transport and conveyor belts or simply vanishing along with their industries.

Six Southport schoolboys did notice, though, and despite being only teenagers they decided to do what they could to preserve the industrial narrow gauge heritage of the north west.

In 1967 their first attempt to acquire a locomotive, an internal combustion Lister from the nearby Burscough Brick and Tile Works, fell through, though two Rustons from

the same source were purchased soon after, one arriving in 1968 and the second the following year. Both these locos, 1 'Clwyd', RH264251 of 1951, and 2 'Tawd', RH 222074 of 1943, remain operational today after spending significantly longer in preservation than industrial service.

Even before the locos arrived the group had identified a site on which to create a railway and, through the contacts of one of them, had gained the landowner's permission to build it. This was in Hesketh Bank, an agricultural village between Preston and Southport, on the west bank of the River Douglas or Asland, not far from its confluence with the Ribble.

The location was particularly appropriate as it was on the perimeter

of a flooded clay pit of Henry Alty's brickworks. Chain-hauled railways, initially 15in gauge but later 2ft 6in, used tub wagons to transport clay to the works for processing, shaping and firing. One of the 15in gauge wagons is preserved at the railway today.

With the clay pit exhausted almost as the schoolboy preservationists arrived in 1967, a supply of abandoned rail was readily available and about 220 yards of 2ft gauge track was laid between the back gardens of houses along Station Road and Becconsall Lane and the edge of the pit. The railway's first item of rolling stock was a flat truck, constructed on two axles from a wagon used on an incline down to Alty's wharf on the River Douglas.

From the outset the new line was known as the West Lancashire Light Railway (WLLR), a tribute to the standard gauge line between Preston and Southport which ran alongside the brickworks and had its Hesketh Bank station just across the road. Promoted by the original West Lancashire Railway Company, it closed in 1964.

Steady progress

Almost from the beginning visitors were welcomed on weekend afternoons and travel was offered, at the passenger's risk, in a six-seater carriage constructed primarily from components salvaged from Alty's and Burscough brickworks. Passenger comfort took a mild turn for the better in 1970, when the WLLR acquired two closed bogie carriages



from the Southport Pier Railway, these declared surplus to requirements when the pier train was reduced in length shortly before its replacement.

Perhaps the most important development was the acquisition of a steam locomotive – 0-4-0ST 'Irish Mail', Hunslet 823 of 1903, was purchased at the Dinorwic Quarry auction in December 1969, costing just £165 because it had no boiler. Undeterred, the WLLR set about sourcing a replacement.

Sister Quarry Hunslet 'Alice' (780/1902), had already been sold and several components had been removed. What remained, happily including the boiler, was still stranded on the Australia level of Dinorwic, one of the highest points in the abandoned quarry at nearly 600 metres above sea level, presenting a major challenge for recovery.

Still undeterred, the group bought Alice for its boiler and after six months of hard work and persistence the rusting remains were gradually manoeuvred down the disused inclines, reaching Hesketh Bank towards the end of 1972. It took a further eight years of work before Irish Mail was fully restored, the WLLR steam era beginning in 1980.

By this time the WLLR had been extended to around 380yd long, curving round east along the edge of the clay pit towards the River Douglas to terminate at Asland station. The formation here was very narrow, squeezed between back gardens and the clay pit with no space for a run-round loop. A brick-built shed and workshops were also gradually taking shape at the other end of the line.

Operation of the WLLR was becoming more formal – a timetable published by 1972 showed three return workings on Sunday afternoons, leaving the main station, called Becconsall after this part of Hesketh Bank, at hourly intervals. Five minutes were allowed to reach Asland. Every self-respecting railway needs an intermediate stop, so trains called on request at Willow Tree Halt two minutes after leaving Becconsall.

The restricted Asland terminus proved unsustainable, so the line was cut back to a new station called Delph, a northern word for quarry, where there was room for a loop and platform. The 'main line' was now very roughly 330yd long and in many respects the WLLR had already become the railway it remains today.

More locomotives

Petrol and diesel machines now came from Sheffield and Liverpool Corporations as well as the ICI explosives factory at Gathurst near



Above: The first steam operation on the WLLR. Irish Mail, in new unlined red paint and without a cab, takes water from a hosepipe while raising steam in Becconsall station. 24th August 1980.

Below: During a gala to celebrate 25 years of the line, 'Montalbahn' awaits departure from Delph. On the loop the Groudle Glen carriage has arrived behind another visitor – 1877 0-4-0VBT 'Chaloner'. October 1992.

Wigan. The next major arrival was the line's first six-wheeled steam loco, an 0-6-0T+WT, Kerr Stuart 2405 of 1915, named 'Joffre' after both the French General and the maker's class designation. Following military and industrial service in France it was withdrawn in about 1950 and although it reached Hesketh Bank in 1974 it was nearly 40 years before it steamed again.

Further four-wheeled Motor Rail, Lister and Baguley i/c locomotives joined the existing representatives from Ruston & Hornsby, Hibberd and Hudson Hunslet. The number of steam locos on the line doubled in 1984 with the delivery of two Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0WT+T machines, 6641 of 1913 and 2378 of 1907. These were not owned by the railway but by two WLLR members and despite their German origins they had worked at a coal mine near Zaragoza in Spain. One, 'Montalban'

was restored to working order in 1989 and 'Utrillas' a decade later.

A further steam locomotive, this time owned by a group of people, reached Hesketh Bank in 2013. 0-4-0ST 'Sybil', Bagnall 1760 of 1906, was like Irish Mail an ex-Dinorwic engine and its restoration to service in late 2023 raises the prospect of Dinorwic days in Lancashire. Battery electric shunting locomotives, built by both Greenwood & Batley and Wingrove & Rogers/BEV, also joined the roster.

Most 2ft gauge locos are relatively portable and the WLLR has a long history of visiting engines, with 'Chaloner' and 'Pixie' from Leighton Buzzard celebrating the railway's 25th anniversary in 1992. Continuing a long tradition, 2023's visitor was Apedale's Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0WT 'Ashanti'. The loco continued on to Beamish, making transport costs, which have recently significantly

»





increased, a more affordable option.

The steam locos based at the WLLR have also visited numerous other lines, with Irish Mail returning 'home' to Gilfach Ddu in 1993 to work on the Llanberis Lake Railway.

Two WLLR visitors became semi-permanent residents. Lytham Creek's Hunslet Dinorwic 0-4-0ST 'Jonathan' (678/1898), stayed from 1986 to 2005 with Apedale's Kerr, Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Stanhope' (2395/1917), present between 1999 and 2010 and a regular visitor since. Unusually Lytham also supplied its Groudle Glen carriage to Hesketh Bank in 1992.

Many changes

By the 1980s the Southport Pier carriages were life-expired and the WLLR constructed two replacements on their frames with a third, of totally new construction and providing universal access, due in 2024. As the WLLR is almost gradient-free with a 5mph speed limit and its trains are short, they are not continuously braked. A four-wheel brake van, built

in-house in the 1980s, is included in all passenger trains.

In 2023 the WLLR had about 20 internal combustion locomotives. Just over half were operational with one, a 1949 Hudswell Clarke mines diesel, used for passenger service when necessary. With Utrillas leaving for the Lancashire Mining Museum in 2021 the WLLR is currently home to five steam locomotives, including 0-6-0WT 'Cheetal', Fowler 15991 of 1923, which last worked on an Indian sugar line and is on loan from Armley Mills Museum in Leeds. Although it is semi-derelect, the WLLR possesses the facilities and skills to carry out almost all locomotive engineering work, demonstrated by the successful rebuilds of Irish Mail and Joffre from a similar state.

Over the years the railway's sheds and works have expanded considerably and now a modern three-road building provides high quality accommodation. Other 21st century additions have included a turntable and water tower.

Above: Irish Mail heads a short demonstration freight – locos generally work chimney-first to Becconsall so that the driver is on the platform side of the footplate at all stations. Summer 1994.

Below: 'Joffre', carrying a 50-year headboard, runs round at Delph. Summer 2017.

Facing page, top: Inside the WLLR's spacious shed, 'Cheetal' awaits a decision about its long-term future restoration. To the rear 'Joffre' and 'Montalban' are out of service, with a 1946 Lister to the fore. 20th August 2023.



The jumble of buildings provides much narrow gauge atmosphere, enhanced by Becconsall station, where the passenger building evokes lines such as the Rye & Camber. The containerised toilet block, installed in 2020, has been given corrugated cladding and a pitched roof to match. Continued use of Edmondson tickets adds to the heritage atmosphere.

The WLLR's tenure on its site was always based on a series of short-term renewable leases from Alty's, with redevelopment an ever-present possibility. Relocation was considered, both to abandoned standard gauge trackbeds and to greenfield sites in the area, but nothing worked out. In 2018, though, planning permission was finally granted for a major housing development on the brickworks site. The claypit itself and its perimeter were excluded and discussions took place about including the railway in a rural heritage park, planned for the non-housing part of the site. In the end agreement was not reached and the two organisations went their separate ways, the WLLR buying the land on which the railway runs.

The boundary of the WLLR's property is tight to the railway's footprint, ruling out any realistic prospect of extension. There are some advantages to operating a short line, though. The brief journey, with the additional spectacle of the engine running round at both ends, keeps younger children interested throughout. And WLLR steam locos are coal-fired, in 2023 still using Welsh supplies, but the escalating cost and reduced availability of fuel does not loom quite so large when only four tons are required for an entire year's operation. Ovoids have been successfully trialled as well.

Today the Hesketh Bank site is unrecognisable from 50 years ago. The flooded clay pit has been partially filled in and extensive tree growth means that passengers can be completely unaware of its existence. All traces of the brickworks have gone and the approach to the railway has changed dramatically, with a new car park reached past the housing estate.

Family appeal

Although enthusiasts are always made very welcome, the railway's main market is the family groups who bring in most of the essential fare and ancillary income. To cater for them and to encourage return visits the WLLR has developed a monthly programme of special events. The large headboards sported by locos on days such as Princess and Pirates or Strawberries and Steam may not appeal to enthusiasts, but these events

earn the money all heritage railways need to survive. Though each event takes considerable planning, with much volunteer input both in advance and on the day, it is well worthwhile in terms of the publicity, local goodwill and funding accrued.

A railway ticket, discounted if bought in advance online, allows unlimited travel on the day, with most visitors making more than one trip. Further income comes from coach parties as well as engine driving courses and private hire of the line. Catering has been considerably improved recently, encouraging longer stays on site, while the welcome provided by the volunteers also helps to promote return visits.

Like every heritage railway the WLLR was badly hit by Covid-19, though being a purely voluntary operation the implications were not quite so severe as elsewhere. As soon as permitted the 80 or so volunteers returned to site on a socially-distanced basis, allowing work to resume on projects such as the new toilet block and Sybil's restoration.

A grant of £18,900 was received from the Cultural Recovery Fund to help with losses sustained during the pandemic and an additional £10,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund assisted with site improvements, accessibility and retraining.

Community champion

Since 2006 the railway has been run by a registered charity, the West Lancashire Light Railway Trust. A separate charity, the West Lancashire Locomotive Trust, is responsible for some of the locos, including Irish Mail and Joffre, while Sybil is owned by a third trust. Highlighting the regard for the railway as a community asset, the Chair of Trustees recently accompanied the local MP to a Downing Street reception for Local Charity Champions.

Heritage railways are as much about people as trains. As part of the WLLR's commitment to community involvement, a group of adults with learning disabilities takes part in the regular Thursday work sessions, when a surprisingly large number of volunteers, not all of them railway enthusiasts, can be on site. Succession planning remains a major issue though the WLLR is fortunate to have several younger volunteers among its ranks, some of whom have gone on to use the skills acquired at Hesketh Bank in railway or engineering careers.

These younger volunteers continue the traditions established in the earliest days of the WLLR. Although the dreams and aspirations of youth often fade, the six Southport

www.narrow-gauge-world.co.uk



Right: 'Stanhope' runs round at Becconsall, with the new housing estate that has dramatically changed the surroundings of the railway prominent in the background. Two flagmen protect the crossing over the approach to Becconsall from the new car park. 26th June 2022.



Below: Visiting from Apedale, the Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0WT 'Ashanti' arrives from Delph into Becconsall. The building recalls those on several narrow gauge lines, many now lost. 30th July 2023.

Photos by Donald Brooks

schoolboys remained faithful to their vision, resulting in the well-established and successful railway that today welcomes 9,000 visitors annually and provides a fitting memorial to the industrial narrow gauge lines of the past. **NGW**

More Information

Donald wishes to thank Mike Spall and Richard Marston for help with this feature. Further information on the railway is available at: www.westlancsrailway.org and <https://westlancslocomotivetrust.org/>

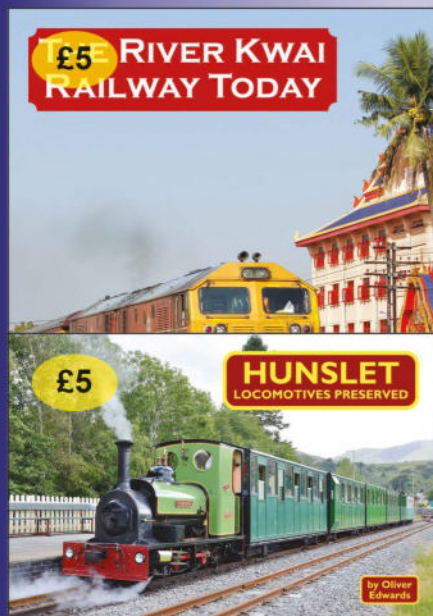


Mainline & Maritime
3 Broadleaze, Upper Seagry,
Chippenham. SN15 5EY
01275 846178
www.mainlineandmaritime.co.uk

MAINLINE &
MARITIME

PLEASE ADD
10% UK P&P,
MINIMUM £2, MAXIMUM £6

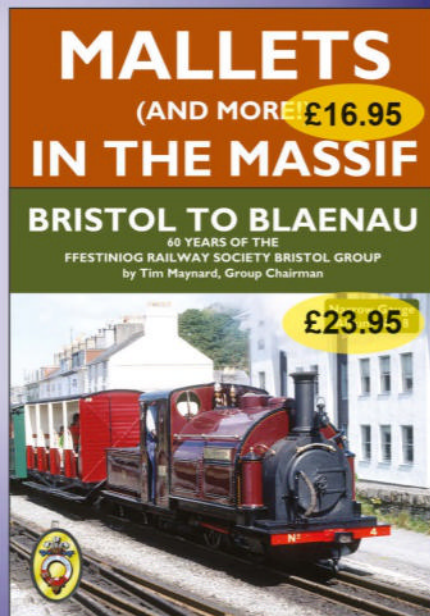
OFFERS!



DID YOU MISS?



TOPSELLERS!



WORLD OF RAILWAYS

NEWSLETTER

SIGN UP TO THE WORLD OF RAILWAYS NEWSLETTER!



Stay up-to-date with latest releases and general railway updates.



Get the latest modelling advice from our team of experts.



Watch interviews with some of our hobby's biggest names.



Hear the newest announcements from us first-hand.



We cover a full range of techniques, gauges and skill levels so you don't miss out.



We'll update you with upcoming model railway events near you.



Enter into our great competitions, exclusive to our members only.



JOIN FOR FREE TODAY

www.world-of-railways.co.uk/account/register

Big show, big layouts

This year's Warley National showed that 009 scale modelling does not have to be all about compact creations in small spaces, as *Andrew Charman* reports.



The Warley Model Railway Club's National Model Railway Show, traditionally held at the Birmingham NEC in November, has always offered plenty to interest those of a narrower-gauge leaning, with on several occasions full-size engines to view alongside a plethora of layouts.

At this year's event on 25th-26th November there were no full-size locos (well at least not narrow gauge – centrepiece of the hall was a GWR large-Prairie loco no 5164), but there were certainly plenty of narrow-gauge layouts, more than 20 of them in fact and offering the usual wide range of subject matter to delight, fascinate and inspire visitors.

The vast majority of the layouts on show were in 4mm 009 scale, and while this is usually the case, this year there was an extra reason. Warley weekend formed the final event in the 009 Society's '50th Anniversary Tour', which back in September had included the superb show held at Statfold.

Village life

The narrow gauge element of Warley is normally grouped together in the 'top-right quarter' of the huge NEC hall and this year was no different, which certainly helped the Society's intention to create a '009 village',

Above: Who says 009 has to be small and compact? 'Bron Hebog', built by Rob Waller and inspired by the Welsh Highland Railway above Beddgelert, was one of the star layouts in action at the 2023 Warley National show.

Right: More very extensive narrow gauge in the form of the Dartmoor 009 Railway Group's clever modular layout, which is themed after the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway and said to represent some 10 scale miles!

*All photos
by Andrew Charman*





Top: The theory behind the modular layout is clear, here showing three sections joined together.

Above: The modular layout did not just innovate in its construction – would the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway have had more chance of surviving if it had been operated by narrow-gauge versions of the famed Pacer multiple units?

Below: Traditional compact narrow gauge remained plentiful, and this was one of the most fascinating. 'Angst-Lesspork', built by Hugh Norwood, has a novel theme, being a tribute to the *Discworld* books of the late Sir Terry Pratchett. Viewers are invited to spot various buildings and characters from the books on the layout.



and which was certainly successfully achieved. Some 10 layouts officially represented the Society along with demonstrations, items from the Society's heritage collection and its publicity stand.

While the subject matter of the layouts on show was certainly varied, from mid Wales to science-fiction author Terry Pratchett (!), they mostly followed the typical 009 modus operandi of being compact creations, each of which took up very little space.

Mind you while we on *NGW* are often emphasising just how little room you need to create a really good 009 layout, it was pleasing also to see a couple of creations that completely went against the grain, being seriously big affairs!

Modular marvel

Firstly the Dartmoor 009 Railway Group's modular layout was displayed in all its glory, claiming to represent some 10 scale miles and fascinating visitors, both with its broadly Lynton & Barnstaple theme and the way that each module, while quite small in many cases, could be easily attached to others.

The Dartmoor Group was originally formed by five friends with similar modelling interests, all of whom were short of space in which to enjoy their hobby but who fancied running on a large layout. So they meet up and link their own small layouts (modules) together to make a much bigger one, with a wide range of themes. All the baseboards have the same-height legs and DCC connections that all work together, and each is linked together with bridging boards. When not meeting members can set up a couple or more at their homes to run their own self-contained layouts – brilliantly innovative!

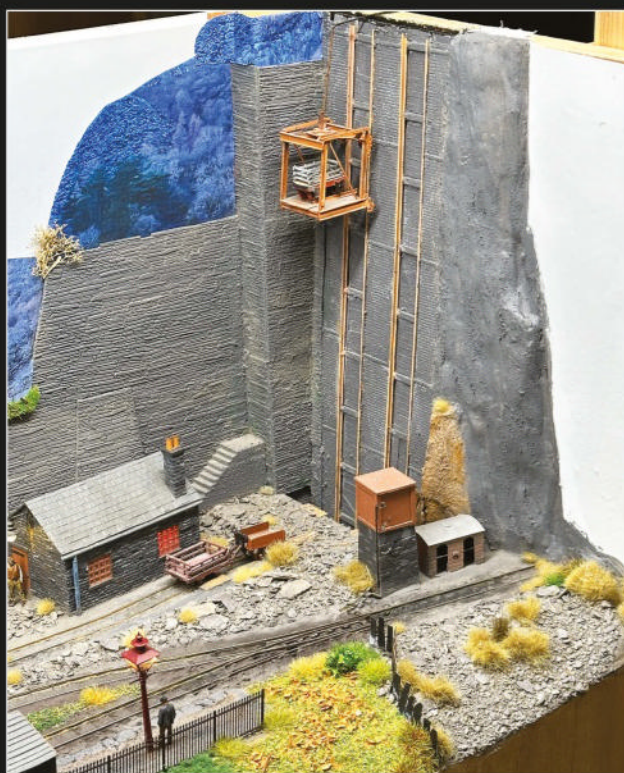
The other big 009 layout will be familiar to many, Rob Waller's 'Bron Hebog', inspired by the Welsh Highland Railway above Beddgelert. As our lead picture shows this certainly made its mark at Warley – it always had a crowd around it with several of those looking on in wonderment the kind of 'wide gauge' modellers who usually would not give 009 a second glance. Not only was Bron Hebog a star of the narrow gauge section, it was for many a highlight of the show as a whole... **NGW**



Above: Superb Tralee & Dingle inspiration on 'Annascaul', built by Paul Thomas in 12mm gauge 00n3 scale. The real bridge over the river remains in existence today.

Right: Our Editor, just beginning to struggle with the scenery on his Welsh slate-themed layout (as you'll read over the page), was suitably inspired by this vertical incline on 'Pen-y-Bont' – the 009 layout that was built by the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's video guru and regular *NGW* modelling contributor John Wooden.

Below: It was not all UK-themed either. 'Karolina Falls', the US-themed On3 layout of David Bailey, is a popular exhibit at shows, with the trestle bridge a highlight feature.



MODEL LINES



Brooks 3D goes tunnelling

Just squeezed out of our very full *On the Shelf* pages this month was the latest news from prolific 009 scale manufacturer Brooks 3D, Nigel Brooks letting us know that the long-awaited body kit for the Hunslet 0-4-0 ex-tunnelling diesel is now available.

The prototype locos were originally built for construction of the Jubilee line extension of the London Underground and several are now on preservation lines. No chassis is supplied with the kit but instructions on how to strip down a Kato chassis to suit are provided. Details are at www.brooks3dmodels.com/#TBird

Nigel Brooks tells us that his next releases are likely to be a gunpowder van, Glyn Valley Tramway carriage and wooden wagons as used on the Corris Railway. A Ruston & Hornsby 44/48 diesel loco is also on the proposed list.

NG North signs up layouts

We're delighted let readers know that plans for the 2024 Narrow Gauge North are ramping up, a year on from what was expected to be the last running of the popular event before new volunteers stepped forward to run it.

More than 20 layouts have already been confirmed for the show which takes place at Pudsey Civic Hall in Leeds on 9th March, in scales from 009 to 16mm. Close to a dozen traders have also already signed up. More details of the show are at www.narrowgaugenorth.org.uk/

Errata – but not ours!

In our reports in *NGW* 179 and 180 from the 009 Society's superb 50th anniversary show held at Statfold in September, we attributed the excellent Darjeeling Himalayan layout to David Wright, as stated in the show guide. Society Treasurer Geoff Bowyer, who organised the show, has been in touch to say he missed this when proof-reading the guide as the layout was actually built by Giles Perkins who is part of the SWOONS (South West 009 Modellers) group and also drives on the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. No worries Geoff, you are allowed at least one error!

Sadly our again suggesting that the 009 Society show should become an annual replacement to the much-missed ExpoNG event was met with visible shaking of the head by Geoff!

Talybont Tales – Scenic Break

Andrew Charman nervously begins the scenic work on his layout – and makes a new-tech discovery...



It has been a while since the last update on the *NGW* project 009 layout – model railways are an all-year round hobby but most progress tends to be made in the winter when there are not the competing attractions of full-size lines to visit, as well as sitting inside in the warm being usually highly preferable to the weather outside!

So to recap, most of the layout's trackwork is down (just the top level of the quarry to do) and the electrics sorted, which means that I can begin to tackle the area most out of my comfort zone – scenery. I am at home with locomotives, trackwork, proper railway stuff, but crafting hills and rocks, adding grass, trees and the like and then painting them to look right is something I find a bit of a challenge!

Mind you I have done it before – my last model railway, built some 40 years ago, was a 'rabbit layout' which of course means lots of tunnels and therefore lots of hills. These were created using 'Mod Roc', a major innovation at the time as it replaced the traditional means of hill-making which was basically papier-mâché.

Mod Roc was effectively a wide bandage

impregnated with plaster, which you would lay on a former, such as chicken wire, and then wet it, the plaster hardening into the desired shape ready for painting.

The multi-level design of the new layout, with the 'main line' running on a mountain-side ledge and above it a slate quarry, would require much scenery forming, so I immediately thought "Mod Roc" and purchased a couple of rolls at the Warley show. But as honorary 009 member and layout-building veteran John Jacobs said to me, "it's such messy stuff to use..." The plaster falls off the bandage rather too easily and even unwrapping a bit of roll for the photo below left my station looking as if it had experienced a couple of snow flurries.

Shape of things

Then Phil Parker, who does scenery with his eyes shut for our sister magazine *British Railway Modelling*, said to me, "you need a Shaper sheet," and pointed me in the direction of the Bachmann stand at the show. Bachmann? We have this maker's locos, stock and buildings on the layout, but scenery? Well yes, because one of the

Bachmann brands is Woodland Scenics, which produces an extensive range of scenic material – and a quite recent Woodlands Scenics innovation is the Shaper sheet.

A nice man from Bachmann duly demonstrated the Shaper sheet to me. It truly is a sheet, the standard versions measuring either nine x 72 inches or 18 x 72 inches and on one side appearing distinctly cloth-like. The other side is foil, looking more like something you would wrap your turkey in before sticking it in the oven... This foil helps provide the sheet with one huge advantage – as I'll reveal directly.

Self-supporting

To use the Shaper you choose the area you want to mould into an embankment, hill or similar and cut a section of sheet big enough to fill it and a bit more. The reason you do this is because the contours, surface indentations and such are formed by scrunching up your piece of sheet, like you would if making a ball of paper, and then unfolding it again. You can be quite creative and once you are satisfied with the result you are left with a truly 3D section, that once finished will also be stiff enough to stand on its own without needing anything under it for support – no chicken wire or the bits of polystyrene I've been collecting for months. Particularly on a layout I am trying to keep as light as possible, that's a real boon.

To seal the section in its new form Bachmann supplies a plaster powder, which you mix with water and then paint onto the section of Shaper sheet. This produces a hard section ready to take paints, scenic powder and such. This plastering can be done off the layout, which is great as mixing plaster works rather better in our utility than in my office where the layout is!

Confused? Woodland Scenics offers a useful little video that takes you through the whole process of using the sheet – have a look at <https://bit.ly/3uKMfNF>



So I duly grabbed myself a Shaper Sheet Learning kit. Costing around £25 it includes an 18 x 24 inch section of sheet and enough plaster, together with earth colour pigments to paint it and a stirring stick and foam brush to spread the plaster.

I was also taken by another learning kit, for casting rock faces, which with the plaster includes a rubber mould in which to create sharp-edged rock formations that you can then incorporate into your finished Shaper sheet sections. More on this shortly...

Back home I selected a small piece of the layout on which to experiment – a corner below the main line that runs on a ledge into a tunnel, for which I had already purchased one of Bachmann's Welsh slate-style tunnel mouths.

Surface dressing

Firstly I had to make good a much-earlier mistake, having laid track on the wood base without colouring it first. I slapped down whatever paint I had to hand, in this case some old matt grey enamel, to form a base for the later scenic treatment – if the final scenics ever get chipped it won't be obvious because the surface underneath will be grey and not plain wood.

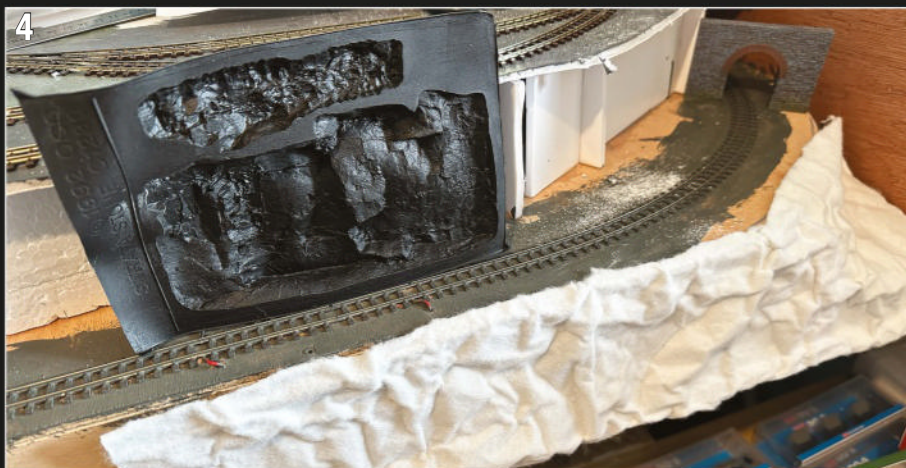
I intend the track to be buried in its ballast like on many narrow gauge lines so I randomly slapped paint over the sleepers and rail, then running a wagon by hand over the rail to clear it of paint and maintain the electrical pick-up.

I then cut a section of Shaper sheet to fit a length of the mountainside below the track, making it wider at one end to fill in where the ground falls away – the picture shows this. Said sheet was duly scrunched up to create an impression of rock outcrops – for this first section I was fairly conservative, basically wanting to see how it all worked. I also curved the bottom under the wood lip I had added when building the baseboard to provide a distinct edge, and once formed the sheet happily stayed put without needing extra support, as billed.

Once I was happy with the look, the length was removed and taken to our utility. The plaster was mixed according to the instructions, 2.5 parts plaster to one part water, brushed into the surfaces and crevices of the sheet, and left to dry for 12 hours.

The first and last pictures of this spread show the finished section and for a first attempt I was quite pleased with it. Next step will be to paint it in suitable colours, and I will describe this next month, after I have made up another section of Shaper to complete the rocky cliff running along the front of the layout.

You can also see my first attempt at casting the rock faces in the pictures and this didn't quite work as well. I admit that not having accurate measuring cups to hand (Mrs C wasn't at all keen at me taking her cooking implements!) I think I got the mixture too wet, so that when it dried it wasn't very strong and easily cracked – I'll be having another go before next month's update, so watch this space... **NGW**



Heading picture: New technology has made making rock faces rather simpler a process.

Photo 1: Mod Roc bandage, the traditional method, which can prove rather messy...

Photo 2: The new way – Woodland Scenics Shaper sheet, cloth on one side, foil on the other.

Photo 3: Running a wagon along the newly painted track surface to clean the rail.

Photo 4: Shaper sheet moulded to form rock face, with mould for rock casting above.

Photo 5: Finished section of sheet 'painted' with mixed-up plaster.

Photo 6: Finished first effort – the rock face has worked pretty well in our opinion, but the rock casting needs a second go...

All photos by Andrew Charman



7mm Lynton excellence from Lionheart



Modellers in 7mm narrow gauge may have felt a little hard done-by in recent times as they watched the explosion of UK-specification ready-to-run items in the smaller 009 4mm scale. Well they need feel that way no longer as the new Lynton & Barnstaple locos and carriages from Lionheart Trains, a brand of Dapol, are now on sale – we are pretty sure the first ever ready-to-run 7mm scale models of UK locos.

We've followed the development of these models over the past couple of years and we can now show the finished product, these samples received by Andy York for review in *NGW's* sister magazine *British Railway Modelling*. And Andy has clearly been impressed, describing the loco as "a stunning working replica."

The locos are available as 'Exe' in original condition with early cab and motion cover, 'Yeo' in 1903-1913 condition with open motion and 'Taw' in the final L&B holly green livery with cut-back cab to improve visibility for the crew. All three are also available in lined Maunsell green Southern Railway livery with the later cab style spanning the period to closure of the line in 1935.

Andy adds that immediate highlights are the weight, the impressive detail and fine finish. The five-pole motors in the diecast body make these powerful models easily able to pull 12 carriages. A Next-18 DCC decoder socket is easily accessed through a removable smokebox door while other features include directional lights and a soft firebox glow.

Lionheart have also produced Open Third, All Third, Third Brake and Composite Brake carriages in both Lynton & Barnstaple dark terracotta and ivory livery for the pre-grouping period and Southern Railway Maunsell green from 1924 to 1935.

Andy dubs these as "quite stunning". They have a respectable weight with a low centre of gravity and a lot of fine detail evident, such as the gas lighting fittings to the roof with fine piping. All the door turn handles and grab handles are individual parts but fitted in a robust manner to ensure easy handling without worry of damage.

Unclipping the roof reveals an equally detailed interior with slatted seats in Third and upholstered in First. An LED lighting bar is fitted in the roof and can be upgraded to a DCC-fitted version which gives control over the lighting for day or night operation.

Andy adds one warning that both loco and carriages are designed for a minimum radius of 2ft. Both can also be easily regauged to 14mm for those who want to accurately model the L&B's 1ft 11.5in gauge to scale.

These are not cheap models, the RRP of the locos starting from £378.00 and the carriages £118.80 – but as Andy says, "You are getting what you pay for... a decade or so ago would we ever have foreseen that we would see such models?"

All photos by Andy York

Produced by Lionheart Trains

Phone: 01691 774455

Web: www.dapol.co.uk/collections/lionheart-trains

Price: Locos from £378.00; Carriages from £118.80





Amerton Railway

Come to Amerton in 2024



New for 2024

Heritage + Nature Walk :
Watch the wildlife and the Trains !

Amerton Museum : Railway history + displays
Events Programme : Bigger & Better for 2024 !

Look out for monthly Events on our website
For Updates on what's going on at Amerton please visit

www.amertonrailway.co.uk

Facebook@Amerton Railway

THE WONDERS OF NARROW GAUGE LIVE STEAM RAILWAYS IN YOUR GARDEN



LILLA 0-4-0 Live Steam 1ft:16mm Scale Model
As Found On The Ffestiniog Railway

This and Other Prototypes Available To Order!

Designed, manufactured and built in Doncaster, UK with Pride

Check out our website www.roundhouse-eng.com

Or call us on 01302 328035 to request a

Free Catalogue!

Email us at: mail@roundhouse-eng.com

ROUNDHOUSE

**DUNDAS
MODELS**

MILLIE STREET KIRKCALDY

FIFE SCOTLAND KY1 2NL

Telephone: 01592 640896

Website: www.dundasmodels.co.uk

Email: sales@dundasmodels.co.uk

Visit our Illustrated Website to see the complete range of Dundas Models 009 Kits and the products from 40 other 009 and NG Suppliers. A vast and varied selection of Narrow Gauge Products, RTR, Kits, Peco Track, Buildings, Accessories & Books. All at competitive prices.



DM53 Ffestiniog Railway 3 Ton Slate Wagon

£2.00 for our 009 Catalogue (post free) UK Post & Packing £3.00 per order.
Overseas Postage at cost (VAT deducted from Overseas Orders).



SUBSCRIBE TO

**NARROW
GAUGE
WORLD**

The only magazine that puts narrow gauge centre stage!

9 Issues for £34.99

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SUBSCRIBE
WWW.WORLD-OF-RAILWAYS.CO.UK/NGWSUB

Yesterday's history, today's news and tomorrow's projects, Narrow Gauge World magazine is not one to be missed.

SUBSCRIBER PERKS:

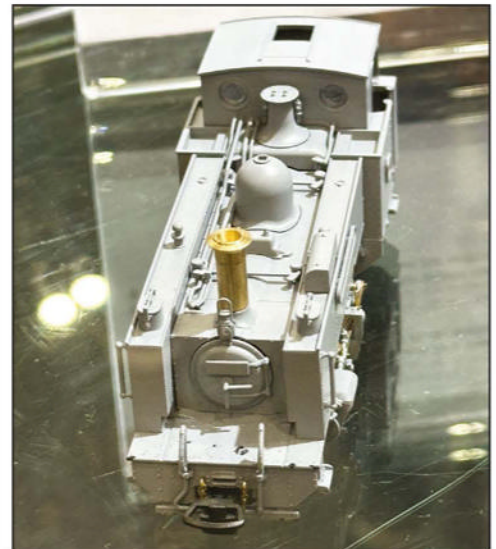
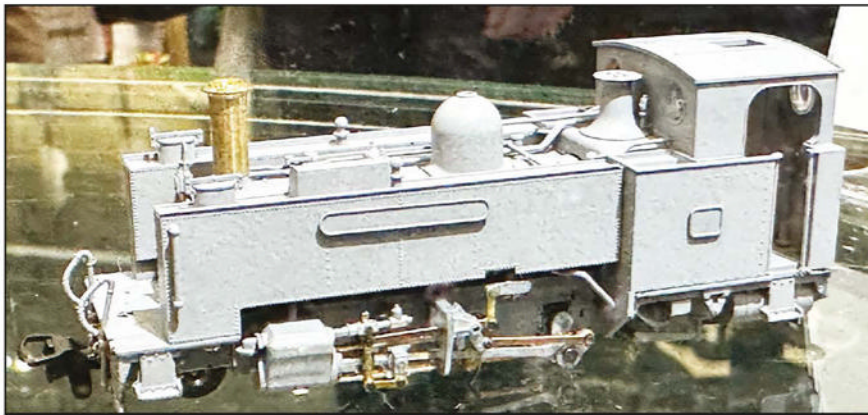
- ✓ 9 issues a year
- ✓ FREE delivery
- ✓ Only £3.88 an issue

Subscribe now, you don't want to miss out!

T&C'S: UK offer only. Your subscription will be charged at £34.99 by direct debit per year.
Minimum term of 1 year.

ADVERTISER'S INDEX

BACHMANN	2
DIGITRAINS	4
MAINLINE MARITIME	38
DUNDAS	45
ROUNDHOUSE	45
STAFFS	45
RAILS OF SHEFFIELD	51
ACCUCRAFT	52



■ At the Warley show *NGW* was able to view the latest progress on the 009 Scale Vale of Rheidol 2-6-2Ts which are being developed by Revolution Trains in association with *Model Rail* magazine. As can be seen from these pictures the locos, due in shops sometime this year, are going to be fine models. The engineering prototype even took a brief turn on one of the layouts at the show.

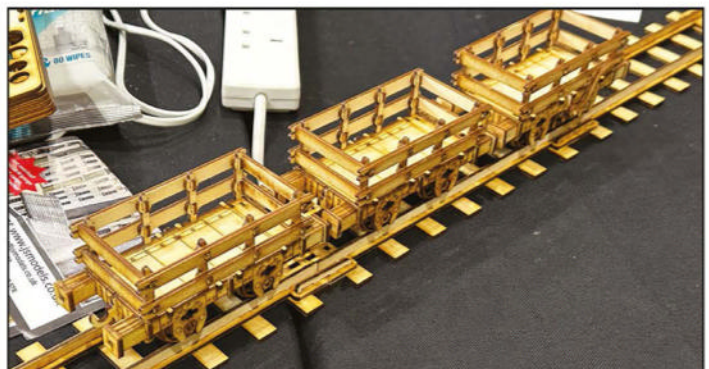
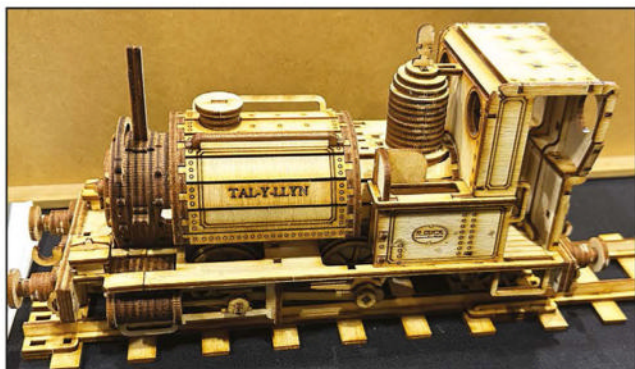
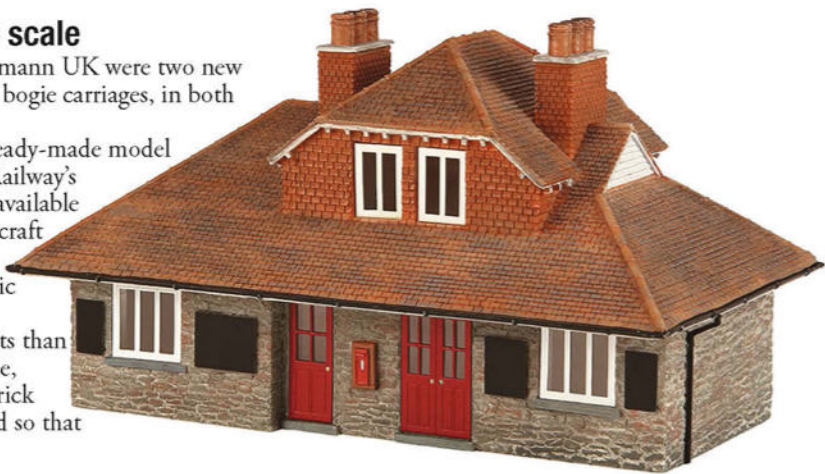
Bachmann makes Lynton's Woody Bay in 009 scale

Included in the winter new-release announcements from Bachmann UK were two new 009 scale variants of the now ready-for-production Gloucester bogie carriages, in both Ashover and later Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway liveries.

Likely to delight many more 009 modellers, however, is a ready-made model in Bachmann's Scenecraft range, of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's Woody Bay station. The finely detailed resin structure will be available with red or green doors, and joins the recently launched Scenecraft offerings of the Ffestiniog Railway buildings at Porthmadog.

Already on sale are slate slab wagons as used by the Dinorwic quarries. These are tiny, each measuring just 25mm long and weighing three grams! So they'll likely be better as static exhibits than being shunted about in trains... They are offered in sets of three, either as flat wagons or with sides and in either plain grey or brick red liveries. They have standard 009 couplings only at each end so that the set can be close-coupled using hook-and-loop units.

Produced by Bachmann Europe Web: www.bachmann.co.uk
E-mail: customer.services@bachmann-europe.co.uk
Price: Wagons £49.95-£56.95 (set of three)



■ We also spotted these large-scale laser-cut wooden models of Tallyllyn Railway prototypes at Warley, being put together in the modelling demo section of the show. They are made by an American company called R.Duck Locomotive Works, which already produces a number of American kits as well as some UK standard-gauge subjects. However we were told by the fellow building the models that the proprietor of R.Duck is a huge fan of the Tallyllyn, and that further models are likely! They are to 16mm scale, unpowered, running on 32mm gauge track and made from birch plywood, but you can also order a huge version of Tallyllyn in 2.5-inch gauge! R.Duck also produces an Alco War Department engine – more details can be had at <https://rducklocomotivestore.etsy.com>

Wemyss Trams and Early Buses

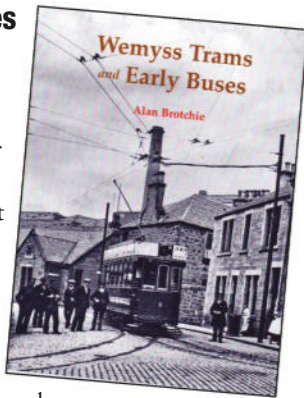
Alan W Brothie

■ Prolific tramway author and tram restorer, Alan Brothie, has dug deep into the tramway and early bus past of Wemyss Fife coalfield, once served by the narrow-gauge Wemyss and District Tramways Company. Its 3ft 6in trams ran on a ten-mile electrified line, linking Kirkcaldy with Leven between 1906 and 1932. Sections of street running were interspersed with cross-country, right-of-way stretches. The trams were the brainchild of local coal magnate and laird, Randolph Gordon Erskine, also builder and owner of the Wemyss Private Railway, which transported coal from the laird's pits to the docks.

Wemyss saw the tramway as essential to providing his workers with cheap and efficient transport, and the local towns and villages all benefitted from the tramway. Sadly, the trams, like all the narrow-gauge Scottish, small town systems, similar to the Wemyss company, gave way in the early 1930s to the all-conquering motor bus, the debut of which is also covered.

Well-illustrated, with many coloured postcards of the era used to effect, beautifully written and thoroughly researched, this is a book for anyone who finds tramways, and narrow gauge ones, in particular, fascinating, not forgetting the early buses and social history that is included, and that make it just the ticket. **HD**

Published by Stenlake Publishing Ltd
ISBN 978-1-84033-922-2
Web: www.stenlake.co.uk
Tel: 01290 551122
Price: £29.95



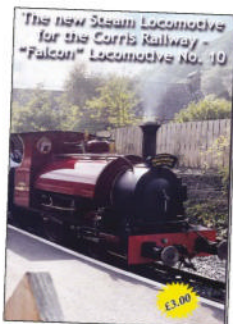
The new Steam Locomotive for the Corris Railway – Falcon No. 10

■ This inexpensive A5 booklet, running to 36 pages, brings together the story of the 14-year project to build a brand-new Hughes Falcon 0-4-2ST locomotive for the Corris Railway, which *NGW* readers will know reached a successful conclusion in the Autumn of 2023 when Corris No.10 entered service on the mid-Wales line.

With text written by Corris press officer John Simms and colour photos throughout, the booklet documents the highs and lows of the project, from first fund-raising what was thought to be a required £300,000 but which ended up being rather more, to construction and the setbacks caused by Covid, to final painting and commissioning.

This is a compact little title that shows just what determination can bring even if you are one of the smaller heritage groups. The book also briefly describes other Corris projects underway, including the massive embankment being built for the extension push south – with No. 10 as evidence, there's little doubt the dedicated Corris team will succeed in their aim. **AC**

Published by the Corris Railway Society
Available from Corris online shop at www.corris.co.uk
Price £3.00

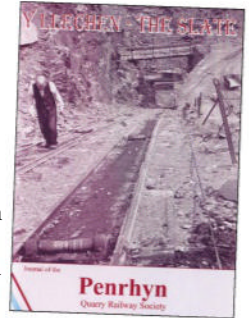


The Penrhyn Quarry Railway Society legacy

■ In *NGW* 179 we reported that members of the Penrhyn Quarry Railway Society had agreed that the society should be closed but that the funds, artifacts and archives would form its legacy. The funds have already been used to purchase an early 19th century Thomas Hughes Penrhyn point for the Bala Lake Railway's Heritage Centre, and other Penrhyn-related projects to benefit the Bala Lake Railway from ex-PQRS funds are being discussed.

The PQRS journal, *Y Llechen – The Slate* was always well-received by members and they wanted publication to continue. The editor since 2006, Robin Willis, agreed to publish the journal on a subscription basis – the quarterly publication dates will continue as will the content of articles about Penrhyn based on original research, previously-unpublished photos, drawings & queries plus reprints from magazines (Victorian times to recent).

Readers can obtain a free sample copy of a recent issue of *Y Llechen* by emailing their name and address to y.llechen@yahoo.com. Other PQRS publications such as facsimile reprints of rare illustrated Penrhyn Quarry publicity booklets will also continue.

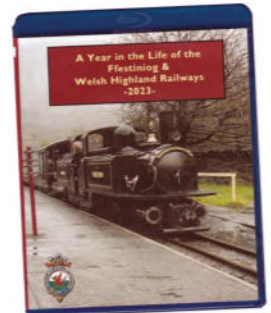


A Year in the Life of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways - 2023 (DVD/BluRay)

■ What is effectively the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways' video yearbook is always a highlight of the turn of the year and this year's does not disappoint. Over 2½ hours on the DVD, and an extra hour on the BluRay, a year's worth of action on the two lines is covered in detail, from big events with the likes of the new Baldwin '590' and Hunslet 'Russell' stretching their legs on the Welsh Highland, through core projects such as the Boston Lodge works interpretation to the completion and launch of new double-Fairlie 'James Spooner' (spot the *NGW* editor!) to the nitty-gritty stuff that keeps the FF&WHR running.

As one expects from FR video expert John Wooden it's all filmed to a very high quality, with lots of interesting angles and use of drones to bring over the true grandeur of these railways. There are a few interviews but no irritating commentary, just brief on-screen sub-titles with the content providing the soundtrack. We'll say it again – with wind and rain lashing down outside, what better way to while away a few hours? **AC**

Published by Festiniog & Welsh Highland Railways,
Tel: 01766 516034. Web: www.festrail.co.uk/shop
Price £20.00 (2hr 25 min DVD), £25.00 (3hr 25min BluRay) plus post

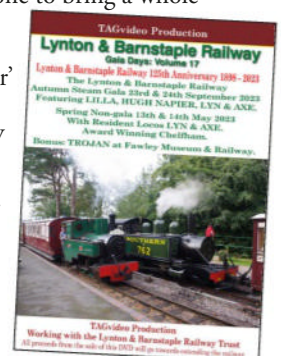


Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Gala Days Vol 17 (DVD)

■ Trevor Garnham's dedicated video coverage of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway's Gala events has reached some 17 episodes, and he always finds a new angle or item of interest, no mean achievement as he still only has a mile of railway to focus on!

The innovation this year is the use of a drone to bring a whole new aerial look to the action. Both the May and September events are covered, the latter featuring guest locos 'Lilla' and 'Hugh Napier' from the Ffestiniog Railway, plus extra chapters on Chelfham station and the Fawley Museum and railway. As ever Trevor misses nothing and all proceeds go towards giving him more than a mile of line to film on! **AC**

Produced by TAG Video Productions for L&B Trust,
available from railway or at www.lynton-rail.co.uk/
shop/browse 120 minutes, Price £12.00 plus post



Not just on the plate

I was most interested by the editorial in *NGW*180 'Playing to the audience' – as an active volunteer and a guard on a heritage railway, I agree wholeheartedly with the sentiments expressed, but the use of the term 'footplate crew' suggests only those present on the locomotive footplate.

Please remember that there are many other members of staff and volunteers who come into contact with the public during their visits to our lines – working in the guard's van, signal box, platform, cafe, shop, museum and not forgetting those in the workshop. All will come into contact with visitors to a greater or lesser extent and thus a positive, friendly attitude is vital in leaving our visitors with a good impression of the railway and the heritage railway movement as a whole.

Speaking as a guard, having this friendly, helpful attitude is a large and important part of my role whether it be helping passengers on and off the train or finding lost property. 'Playing to the audience' is a team role and a responsibility of all. **Gerry Balding**

Andrew C replies: I couldn't agree more! But in my experience if one does experience grumpy staff and volunteers, and I hasten to add it doesn't happen often, they are more likely to be on the footplate, and yes this can reflect the serious nature of the role. Guards especially tend to be people who enjoy interacting with the public, though they have an equally safety-critical role.

At the end of the day all of us need to ensure we give our visitors a good experience, hopefully encouraging them to come back, and in truth the vast majority of us do.

Encouraging diversity

Further to your editorial in *NGW*180, diversity within the railway preservation world, both narrow gauge and otherwise, should be encouraged. One of the most significant problems confronting preserved railways is the shortage of volunteers – any discouragement due to their diversity can be ill-afforded.

I fear that not all railways are as welcoming of diverse volunteers as is the Talyllyn. This is one of the very few railways (possibly the only one) that can run an entire service for a day using only women volunteers.

I am a trans woman, working on the Talyllyn, one of several trans women volunteers. Earlier this year I had a trans woman working with me in the brake van for a day, possibly the first time this has happened, but nobody regarded this as exceptional.

In addition the TR has countless

"One of the most significant problems confronting preserved railways is the shortage of volunteers – any discouraging of them due to their diversity can be ill-afforded..."

Above right: David Bott photographed this double-headed working on the Harz on 4th September 1974 with the help of a guard who 'forgot' that officially photography without a permit was forbidden! See 'Turning a Blind Eye'.



other members of the LGBT++ community, all working together to further one aim, the preservation of the Talyllyn Railway. What can possibly be wrong with that?

May I urge any volunteers on railways experiencing difficulties due to their LGBT++ status, or anyone fearful of working on a preserved railway due to their diversity to join us on the Talyllyn; you will be very welcome. **Isla Sheppard**

Andrew C replies: Many thanks to Isla for a letter that is good to read – the Talyllyn has led the way in so many ways over the years...

Turning a blind eye

Further to James Waite's letter in *NGW*180 regarding the repainting of 99.5901 on what is now the Harzquerbahn, in August 1979.

My first trip to the GDR was in 1974. On 4th September my train from Wernigerode to Nordhausen was at Benneckenstein, waiting for a northbound working to pass. I wasn't aware at the time that photography was forbidden in the area, so I alighted to photograph 99.5903/NWE13 with its train in the bay platform.

I then wandered to the front of my train as the double-headed 11.42 from Nordhausen to Wernigerode was approaching. The guard stopped me to enquire whether I had a permit. I said no, whereupon he replied "Well I haven't seen you" and physically turned my shoulder to face the oncoming train.

Having got my photo, the guard then said that the 'tourist train' was back along the platform. I replied (in German) "Yes, I've already seen it", at which he began to laugh. Even 50 years ago there were good-hearted railwaymen in the GDR.

I made eight more visits thereafter, including the one when, because of my limited time in the country, I didn't bother to get an exit visa, but that, as they say, is another story!

David Bott

Lynton issues

I read the article in *NGW*181 about the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway ('Board split sparks fears over Lynton revival' – *UK News*) with a real sense of disappointment. I have been a keen follower of the fortunes of the railway from a distance and to realise that the lack of progress may be down to warring trustees and not endless red tape or financial troubles is seriously concerning to me and I'm sure, others.

The railway has everything that you'd want from a tourist attraction, great location, attractive rolling stock, a big following and it would seem many willing volunteers – sadly let down by, it seems, poor management.

Don't these people realise that while they play politics they are letting down the many enthusiasts that look to them to lead this potentially brilliant project? It is enough of a challenge to do this sort of thing without needless bickering.

What a great achievement this could be, I hope it isn't ruined by oversized egos too blind to see the bigger picture. **Peter Ovenden**

It is very unfortunate that disagreements within the L&B Trust have spilled out into the public domain. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the situation, the fact that serious differences of opinion exist among the trustees has an effect on how the wider world views the railway. These kinds of things are best kept in-house if at all possible.

I am not a member of the L&B Trust, I know nothing about the railway's matters in dispute or the persons involved. I do know however it would be wonderful to see the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway restored throughout, and to that end I contributed a regular amount for three years during the 2010s towards the construction of the 'Lyn' loco.

I have been considering doing the same for the 'Exe', parts for which are currently being machined at Boston Lodge. But the lack of progress

towards Parracombe and beyond coupled with the situation now prevailing in the Trust is making me think twice about further funding for the moment.

Let us hope therefore that differences are resolved speedily and confidence is restored. It would be a tragedy if work stalled and the remarkable achievements to date progress no further.

Paul Thomson

Andrew C replies: As I stated in my editorial, writing that story gave me no pleasure – but there are clearly serious issues at the L&B which all involved need to sort if what still is the greatest revival project of the 21st Century is to retain that status...

Rail blue on the Rheidol?

I refer to the letter in *NGW* 179 about locomotive liveries on the Vale of Rheidol Railway. The Rail Blue era of the line is often seen by many as a negative thing. True, the unlined blue first introduced in 1968 may have been a bit uninspiring.

In 1976, however, British Rail introduced a revised lined rail-blue livery. The three locomotives actually looked very smart in this, especially with the brass double arrows on the cab sides of the locomotives, plus the brass nameplates with red background on the side tanks. It suited them particularly well.

Maybe, just maybe, one of the three locos could be repainted in this lined rail blue livery with brass double-arrows...

Andrew Cook

Andrew C replies: We suggested this to VoR MD Llŷr Ap Iolo when we visited recently (see page 32), and his surprising reply was "Never say never..."

Coal – paint the real picture

Mark Smithers rightly says in his letter in *NGW* 181 that heritage railways need to stress pro-actively how minimal their contribution to carbon emissions really is. More than once recently I've overheard critical, and ill-informed, comments which do need to be addressed.

I spotted the notice below outside the engine shed at Exbury recently. We need more of these!

James Waite

Exbury Gardens Railway – Coal Use

As a small narrow-gauge steam railway, Exbury Gardens Railway's fuel use is minor compared to larger heritage railways. Altogether, steam attractions produce just 0.023% of the UK's CO₂ emissions.

The experienced train team here at Exbury Gardens ensures that our engines run efficiently so that they use the smallest amount of fuel possible. We are also trialling fuel alternatives to coal.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In an entire year of running, the Exbury Gardens Railway emits less than a 1/5 of the CO₂ emitted during a single flight to Miami.
- The CO₂ emitted by our railway in a year is captured by the gardens in less than a day.

Who what where?



■ Phil Parker, editor of *NGW*'s sister magazine *GardenRail*, sent over this picture that was taken by his late friend Alan Gibson, and hopes our knowledgeable readers might be able to identify the locomotive. The shot looks to have been taken in preservation and the loco is clearly one of the familiar Bagnall 0-4-0STs, but we wonder which one – the nameplate is not legible. Editor Andrew C wonders if it might be at somewhere like Crich Museum, which had a 2ft gauge line for a while on which 'Pixie' ran. But we are sure our readers will soon tell us – we look forward to your answers, which you can send to editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk

That was the year that...

Narrow gauge news stories from the archives and their legacy...

From 60 years ago Brockham Museum

The main news from the museum is our decision to add another locomotive to our collection, namely the Peckett 'Scaldwell' from the Lamport Pits of Staveley Minerals Ltd... Although the demise of the locomotive has come at a most unfortunate time for the museum, we felt that an effort was worth making to save one of the Pecketts, and it had to be made now. We have been able to obtain a lower quotation at £160, but considering that the loco weighs nearly 17 tons empty this is a fair price. The company were also prepared to give the museum a side-tipping wagon, a three-way point from Scaldwell, and a quantity of locomotive spares. (*NGN, Jan 1964*)



Scaldwell would become the only locomotive to steam at Brockham museum, and then only briefly as a means to move it under cover! It went with the Brockham collection to Amberley, and after several years on display was most recently transferred to the Steamworks centre of the Southwold Railway Trust, the loco's 3ft gauge being an appealing factor. There are apparently plans to restore Scaldwell to running order which James Waite, who took the picture above on 2nd December, commented will be "a very long project..."

Festiniog Railway gets another loco

The Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Blanche' was loaded onto a Scammell low-loader on the morning of Tuesday 17th December and delivered to the Festiniog Railway at Boston Lodge Halt. Mr R T Jones, of Llanrwst, handled the lorry with practised ease and the journey was accomplished in the surprisingly short time of just over two hours. It is unlikely that Blanche will ever exceed on rails the speed she made by road! (*NGN, Jan 1964*)

Extracts from *Narrow Gauge News*, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join up, go to www.ngrs.org.uk



Footplating on the Barsi

Tim Edmonds recalls friendly loco crews on what is today a broad gauge electrified railway.



I became aware of the Barsi Light Railway at an early age. A seventh birthday present from my father was Pat Whitehouse's *Narrow Gauge Album*, in which I read of E R Calthrop's work as Consulting Engineer for both the Barsi and the Leek & Manifold Valley Light Railways. Some 24 years later in 1981 my wife and I travelled with a railway group on a tour of India which gave me the chance to visit the Barsi.

Using IndRail passes, effectively all-India rover tickets, long-distance group travel was booked in advance, but there were several opportunities for independent travel and one such was a day at Kurduvadi, on the 5ft 6in gauge main line between Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai).

Above: At Chinkhill the driver of G 732, heading the 09.00 Kurduvadi-Barsi Town, observes the photographer. An invitation onto the loco followed.

Below: At Shendri the crew of no 726 pose for the camera – Tim and his wife spent most of the run back to Kurduvadi with them on the loco footplate.

Photos by Tim Edmonds, 2nd December 1981

From here the 2ft 6in gauge system of the former Barsi Light Railway stretched east to Barsi Town (34km) and Latur (137km) and south west to Miraj (190km), the distances being those given in the 1981 Central Railway timetable. It was entirely steam-worked, mainly by British-built F class 2-8-2s and G class 4-6-4s.

Travelling overnight from Secunderabad, we arrived at Kurduvadi at dawn on 2nd December and left that evening for Daund, so had the daylight hours to explore the narrow gauge. The line to Barsi offered the best options for travel, with two morning outward trains enabling a short return ride. Many chose to take the 07:00 Latur passenger working as far as Barsi Town, but we decided to have some breakfast at the station and then catch the 09:00 Barsi mixed, shorter and less busy, which was hauled by G No 732 (Nasmyth Wilson 1543/1928).

A lack of other enthusiasts on the train worked in our favour when it came to getting footplate rides as, I

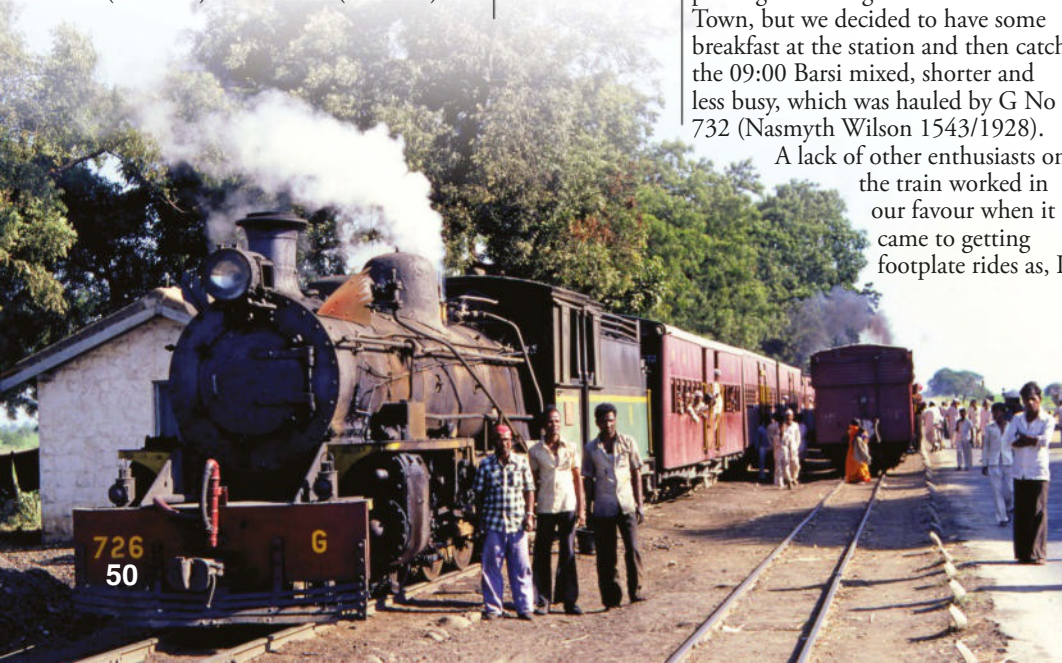
suspect, was the novelty that I was travelling with my wife!

Spacious cab

The line to Barsi is a straight and level roadside route, with five intermediate stations and sprightly running between them. When taking photos at the first stop, Chinkhill, we got talking to the footplate crew, who invited us to join them for the next leg to Mahisgaon in their large and spacious cab. At Shendri, the fourth stop, where we were booked to cross the 03:00 Latur – Kurduvadi mixed, we bade farewell to the crew and gave our thanks.

After photographing the Latur train arriving behind G No 726 (Nasmyth Wilson 1587/1930) we got into conversation with another friendly crew, who posed for a photo at Shendri and then invited us to join them on the footplate at the next stop, Ridhore. We remained there for the rest of the trip back, although we were asked to remain inconspicuous for the arrival at Kurduvadi as the crew were concerned that management might spot us!

We left Kurduvadi that evening with happy memories of our brief encounter with the Barsi trains and their hospitable loco crews. Changes started soon afterwards – the Barsi system was dieselised between 1983 and 1984, then converted to broad gauge between 2001 and 2011 and electrified in 2014. **NGW**





SCAN
FOR
MORE
INFO!

ESTD

RAILS

1970

OF SHEFFIELD

FAMILY
BUSINESS

FRIENDLY
SERVICE

PRE-OWNED & SECOND HAND

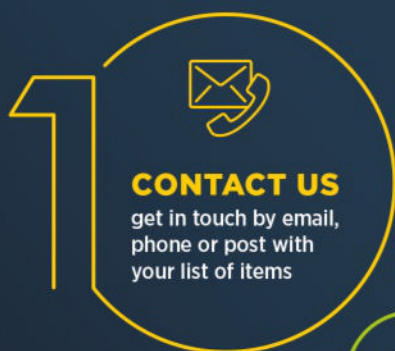
WANTED CASH OR EXCHANGE

BUY • SELL • EXCHANGE • ANY GAUGE • ANY AGE

LOCOS - COACHES - WAGONS - TRACK-WORK - CONTROLLERS - ACCESSORIES
DIE-CAST - LORRIES - BUSES - PLANES - SOLDIERS - RAILWAYANA - AND MORE

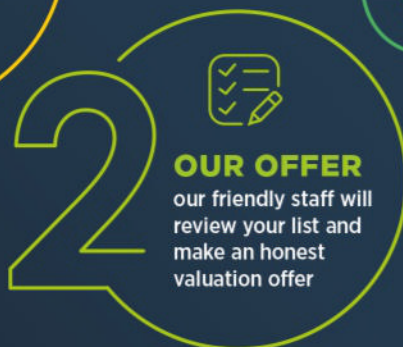
DECEASED ESTATES - EX SHOP STOCK A SPECIALITY
FAST SERVICE WITH COMPLETE DISCRETION ASSURED

WE VALUE YOUR COLLECTION VERY HIGHLY!



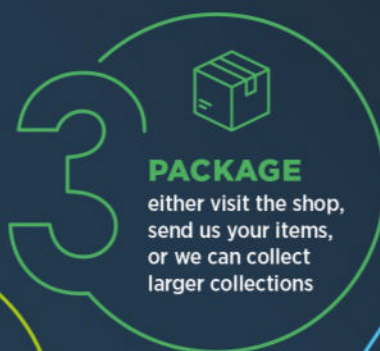
CONTACT US

get in touch by email,
phone or post with
your list of items



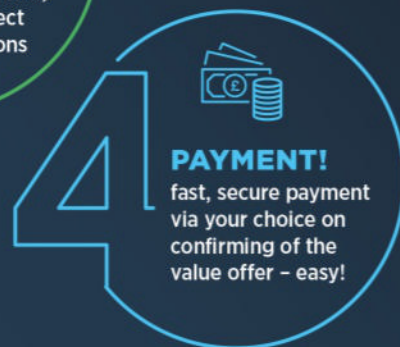
OUR OFFER

our friendly staff will
review your list and
make an honest
valuation offer



PACKAGE

either visit the shop,
send us your items,
or we can collect
larger collections



PAYMENT!

fast, secure payment
via your choice on
confirming of the
value offer - easy!

IMMEDIATE PAYMENT IN 4 EASY STEPS

GUARANTEED

**TOP
PRICES
PAID**

Ref: NARROWGW23

DON'T DELAY - GET IN TOUCH TODAY!

+44 (0)114 255 1436 ✉ secondhand@railsofsheffield.com

OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND CLICK ON THE  Stuff to Sell? LINK:

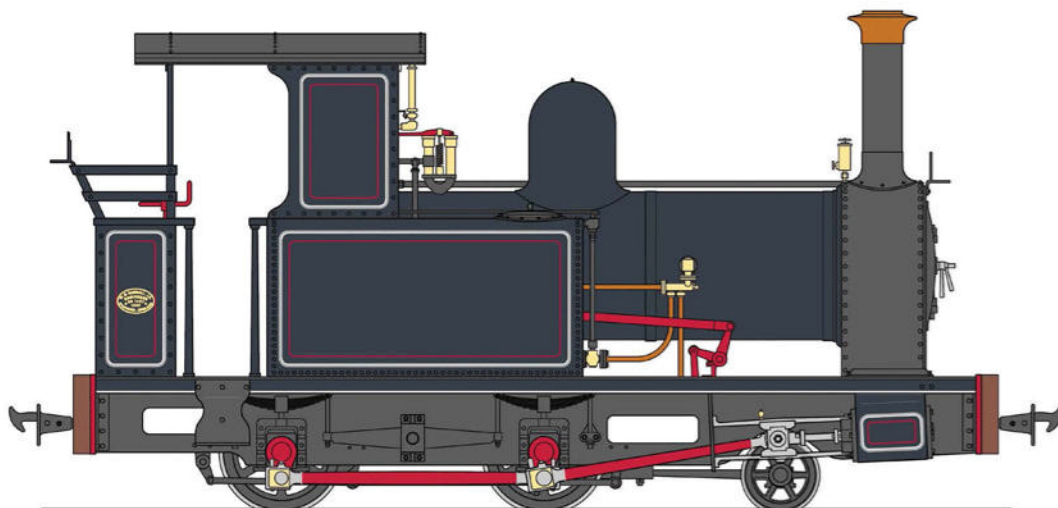
www.railsofsheffield.com

HORNBY
MODEL RAILWAY
Awards
2023
RETAILER OF
THE YEAR!

ACCUCRAFT UK LTD

LIVE STEAM & ELECTRIC LOCOS AND ROLLING STOCK FOR GARDEN RAILWAYS

NEW FOR 2024 – 1:19 BAGNALL 2-4-0T



Following the release of the gorgeous little Peckett, we are delighted to announce that our next small locomotive will be the Bagnall 2-4-0T *Rheidol*. We are sure many associated with 16mm scale will have soft spot for this engine! Originally named *Treze de Maio*, the engine was built by Bagnalls of Stafford for a Brazilian sugar cane plantation in 1896 but never delivered as the order was cancelled, instead the locomotive was regauged from 2' 5 1/2" gauge to 2' 3" gauge when it was sold to the Plynlimon and Hafan Tramway and named *Talybont*. In 1903, after the failure of that railway, it was purchased for the construction of the Vale of Rheidol Railway, regauged to 1' 11 3/4" and renamed *Rheidol*. Absorbed by the GWR in 1923 it was numbered 1198, but it was withdrawn and scrapped the following year, having never carried its GWR number.

The model is gauge-adjustable (32mm and 45mm), gas-fired and fitted with a water top-up valve, water gauge with blow-down valve, lubricator and pressure gauge; constructed of stainless steel and etched brass with a copper boiler, the model will, as usual, be covered by our two-year warranty. The anticipated pre-order RRP is £1795.00 (subject to the usual provisos) available early 2024. Fitted with Accucraft chopper couplings, the model will be supplied with two chimneys, the original balloon stack and the more traditional type. Available in five liveries, full details can be found on the Accucraft UK website.



For details of our complete range of models visit our website - www.accucraft.uk.com
ACCUCRAFT UK LTD. PO BOX 394, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE HR1 9QN
TEL: 01981 241380 email: info@accucraft.uk.com